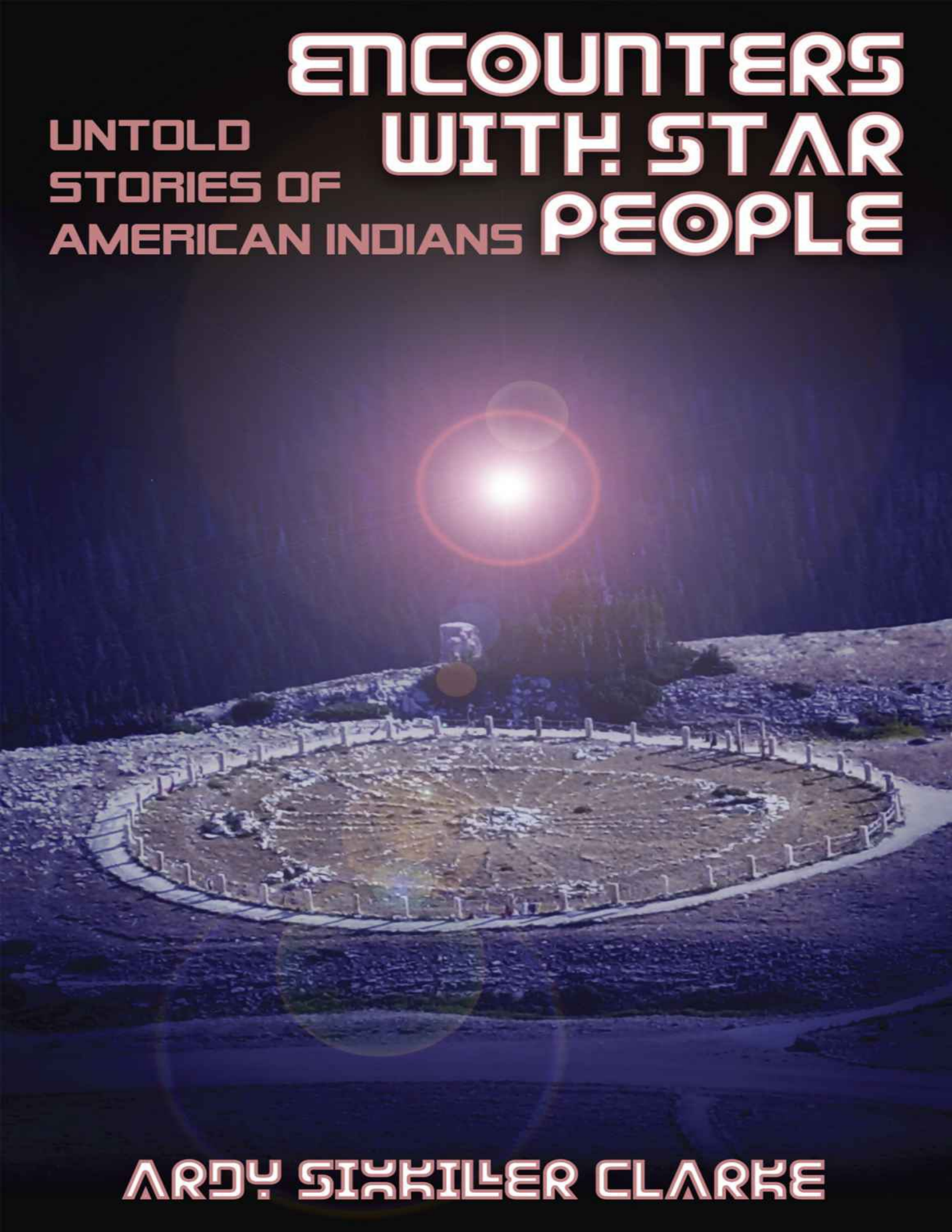
ENCOUNTERS WITH STAR PEOPLE

UNTOLD STORIES OF AMERICAN INDIANS



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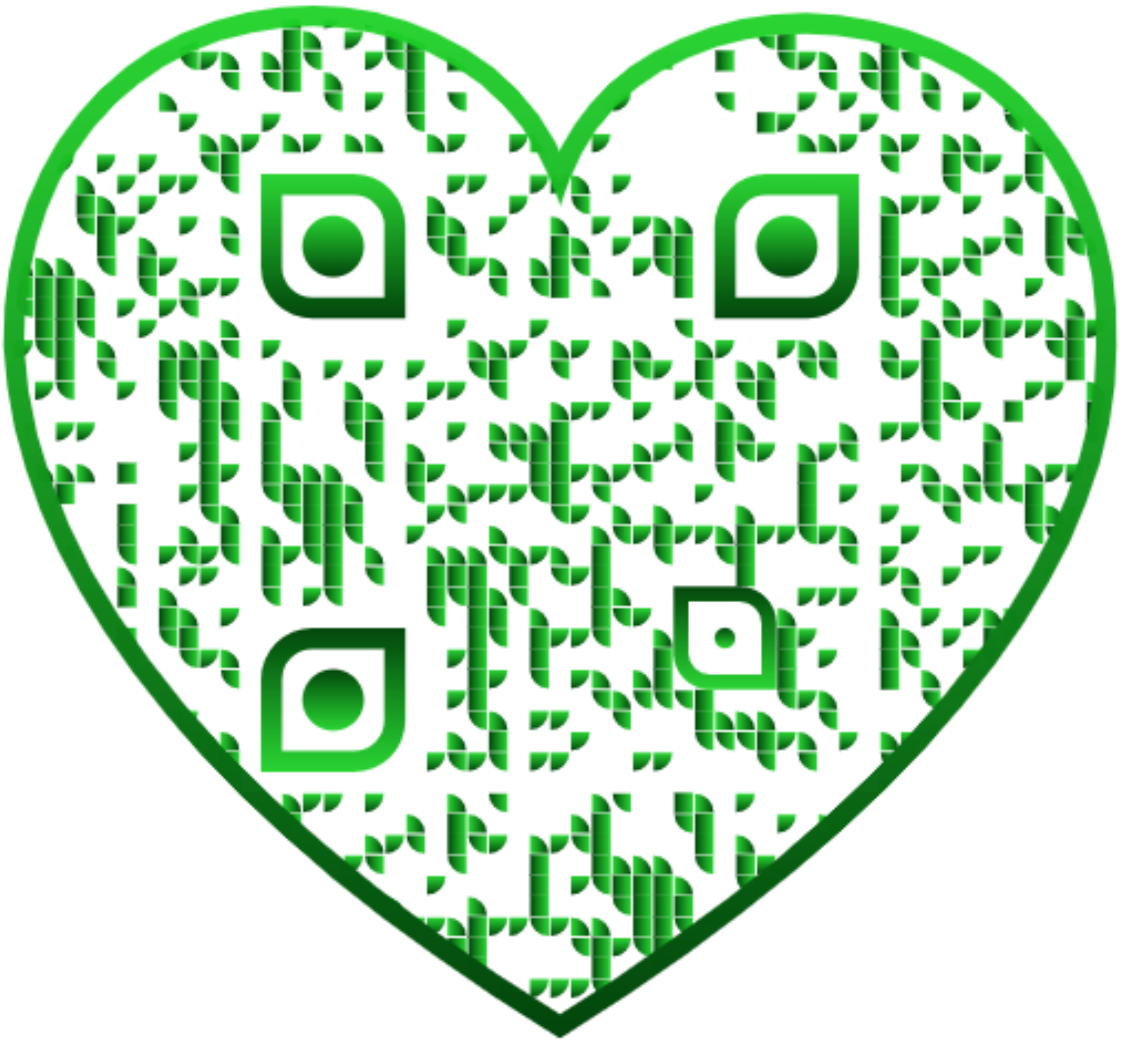

ENCOUNTERS

WITH STAR PEOPLE:

Untold Stories of American Indians

Ardy Sixkiller Clarke

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Author's Note

A number of years ago, a group of American Indian researchers, came together and decided that, in writing and research, we would refer to tribal groups in general as American Indians rather than Native Americans. We made this decision based upon the fact that the use of the term "Native American" was increasingly claimed by those individuals born within the United States regardless of ethnicity. Our position was further validated by award-winning journalist Tim Giago, founder/editor/publisher of the Lakota Times, Indian Country Today, and Native Sun News, who stated: "We realize the word 'Indian' is a misnomer, but for generic purposes, we are forced to use it when speaking of many different tribes....Any politically correct thinker who believes Native American is the preferred identification tag for the Lakota or any other tribe is wrong. Most of us do not object to the use of Indian or American Indian. And as I said, Native American can be used by any American native to this land." I agree with Tim Giago and other American Indian researchers, and in this book I have chosen to refer to the indigenous people of United States as American Indians.

Preface

I first learned about the "Star People" when my grandmother told me the ancient legends of my people. My childhood reality included narratives that traced the origins of the indigenous people of the Americas to Pleiades; stories of little people who intervened in people's lives; and legends about the magical gift of the DNA of the "Star People" that flowed in the veins of the indigenous tribes of the Earth. I embraced the stories of the celestial visitors who lived among the Indian people as part of my heritage.

When I reached adulthood, I put aside the stories of my childhood. It was not until I became an Assistant Professor at Montana State University in 1980 that the ancient stories of my upbringing took on another meaning. During my first year on faculty, I met a colleague who took me to a site overlooking his reservation village and suggested we wait for "the ancestors." He explained that the "ancestors" were the Star People. While surprised by his disclosure, I sat silently waiting for "the ancestors" to appear. Later, when I mulled over the events of the evening, I wondered if other American Indians had similar stories about the "Star People." Thus, my search began for individuals willing to share their experiences.

Over the next 20 years, I collected almost one thousand stories from indigenous people in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific. The majority of the stories were stored on tapes along with copious notes from the interviews. After my retirement, I transcribed the tapes and organized my notes. This manuscript, which reports my interviews with American Indians within the

continental United States and Alaska, is a result of my research.

It is a collection of unique, intimate narratives of encounters that occurred among American Indians and the Star People. The stories you will read were told by people from all walks of life: fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, sons, daughters, laborers, teachers, police officers, artists, veterans, elders, housewives, ranchers, college students, and community leaders. Some had graduate degrees; others had never attended school. Some were adept at computers; others had never used a cell phone, owned a computer or a television set. All were American Indian; the majority of them lived on reservations throughout the country. None were seeking notoriety, and to protect their privacy, pseudonyms have been used and locations disguised.

A few of the stories are about events that occurred before Roswell; however, the majority of the stories took place between 1990-2010. While I collected far more stories than I could ever report in one volume, this book is the first in a series of three about indigenous people and Star People.

As an American Indian researcher, I walked in two worlds. One of the most important considerations for me as a university researcher, trained in both qualitative and quantitative research methodology, was to ensure my qualitative approach did not impact or influence the individuals who related the accounts. Consequently, every effort was made to avoid leading questions or making inferences or suggestions. Equally important was an acceptance of the intrinsic cultural distinctions meaningful to the participants (e.g., recognizing Star People within the context of American Indian cultures as distinguished by the view of “aliens” or “extraterrestrials” in the mainstream society).

Some anthropologists have suggested that two perspectives (“etic” and “emic”) can be employed in qualitative research. The “etic” perspective is the outsider’s interpretation of the experiences

of that culture. An "emic" perspective refers to the way the members of the culture envision their world. In other words, the "emic" perspective is an insider's point of view. Thus, as an American Indian researcher, I chose to approach the research from an insider's perspective, an "emic" viewpoint. In doing so, I never questioned the existence of the Star People, nor was I skeptical of the encounters regardless of how unique or outlandish they might appear to an outsider.

Unique to conducting research among American Indians is the need to establish credibility within the communities. Having a doctorate does not automatically establish a researcher's credibility among indigenous populations. This is generally obtained through an introduction by a relative or friend, whereas such an approach is often frowned upon in the non-Indian culture where random sampling is preferred. Another approach employed within the Indian community is word-of-mouth or what is often referred to as the "moccasin telegraph," whereupon someone learns of your study and volunteers to be a participant if the research is applicable to them. Another condition of credibility often requires that the researcher become a "member" of the extended family. This means, in order to gain trust, the researcher may be expected to participate in the everyday routine, such as preparing a meal or making coffee and engaging in normal, everyday conversation, which allows potential participants to measure the researcher's sensitivity and sincerity.

Research conducted within American Indian communities often involves the willingness to meet a potential participant at a designated place, such as their home or at a place of business convenient to the interviewee. Many of the stories reported took place in school settings or at school events. This is, in part, because I am an educator and during my travels I frequently visited schools to conduct my research and University business. In

addition, in rural, reservation communities, most activities center around the school. It is the town hall, the community center, and the public meeting place of most social, academic, and sports events, which are often located in different buildings in small-town America.

Access to an interviewee often required gifts (to show respect especially when dealing with an elder) in the form of food or tobacco. While this approach is no different than paying individuals to complete a survey form, a common practice in quantitative research, many researchers do not understand the importance of this ritualistic approach. Many of the interviews took place at night or in the late evening, because during my travels I was engaged in academic research, so the interviews concerning UFOs and Star People were left to personal time after business hours or on the weekends. Other meetings took place during summer or holiday vacation breaks.

In some cases, I became friends with a few of the respondents. This is unique to emic research, whereas researchers using an etic approach go on site, conduct interviews, leave and draw conclusions. An emic researcher is already an "insider." The paucity of American Indian researchers, and particularly those conducting research about Star People, are so limited, that individuals who have shared very private encounters often view the interviewer as a "trusted friend." Some of the interviewees traveled to the same national conferences and in the same professional circles as the author.

It is also important to understand that American Indians, as a rule, prefer their privacy and anonymity to publicity or celebrity. Even more important to them is to protect their tribe and reservation from outsiders. Stories of UFOs and Star People would likely attract a number of curiosity seekers and the participants did not want this to happen. Further, many of the applicants who held

professional positions expressed concern that they might lose their jobs because of their revelations. Therefore, a condition of the interviews was that all names and locations would be changed to protect them.

Over the course of the research, the interviewees' motives for discussing their encounters and their perspectives about the events fell in two broad categories. The first group was people who viewed their encounters as a part of their heritage. They were in most cases middle-aged individuals or elders, who had grown up hearing ancient stories about the Star People. They readily accepted their existence and were not duly alarmed by their appearance. The second group were younger people who were more acculturated, and even though they may have heard the ancient stories, were more likely to regard the Star People as aliens than ancestors, a common term among the older generations. Whether this was the result of TV and movies, boarding schools, or the lack of passing on the traditions from one generation to another, there was a distinct difference in this group's perceptions. Along with their skepticism came the fear of losing their jobs or of being teased by other members of their family or even friends. While teasing among American Indians varies from tribe to tribe, it is a common practice that pervades everyday life. Teasing is often a fundamental part of conversation and social interaction. For this reason, verbal traditions, even styles of joke telling, serve as markers for both tribal and, more generally, personal identity. For example, within the book, you will meet two police officers who are referred to by their fellow officers as the "Little Green Men Patrol," because they filed a report about a UFO sighting. This moniker will likely follow these officers until they retire from the police force and they will be repeatedly teased about the event. The younger generation who witness or even willingly participate in such teasing know that should they report such an event, they too

will fall victim to the jokesters who will tease them as well. Thus, some younger interviewees would rather keep their encounters to themselves than risk what they consider humiliation or harassment by their peers. In some cases the interviewees believed their jobs would be in jeopardy since their employment involved trust, level-headedness, and the ability to deal honestly with the public. The fear that reported encounters might suggest mental instability to their employers or supervisors was of paramount concern to some of the participants. While this group was small, it did exist.

The accounts presented herein reveal a worldview accepting of Star People. These encounters are described as conscious experiences recalled without the aid of hypnosis; none are reported as dreams. Indigenous people almost universally regard the Star People as their ancestors; this perception alone allows for interaction without fear and helps explain the uniqueness of the encounters and experiences. I walked with the individuals who told their stories. I listened to their encounters of a different kind. I questioned them, and in the end I believed.

Chapter 1
Missing Time

"Missing Time" is a condition or state reported in conjunction with alien abductions and UFO close encounters. Basically it is a period of unknown time in which an event has occurred but cannot be readily recalled. The gap can last from several minutes to several days in length. The memory of what happened during the missing time reported is often recovered through hypnosis or dreams. Most psychologists believe that this is simply the individual's inability to remember events during that "time period" because of physical or psychological trauma. Others suggest that the extraterrestrials use mind control to erase the events during the abduction.

Missing time is contentious because it is closely aligned to other disputed matters such as regained memories and hypnotic suggestion. There have been several cases of persons who testify that they have experienced missing time just by being in the close proximity of a UFO craft. One of the most infamous cases of missing time comes from Betty and Barney Hill, a couple who ascended to celebrity status, after they alleged to have been abducted by aliens in 1961.

Thousands of people claim they have experienced a missing time episode. The majority recalled their event under hypnosis. In this chapter, you will meet a couple who remember a missing time episode without the aid of a hypnotist.

Sarah and Tim

I met Sarah and her husband, Tim, at a restaurant off the Interstate in Billings, Montana. I heard about them from a mutual friend, who told me that Sarah learned that I was collecting stories about UFOs and she and her husband wanted to tell me their story. Neither Sarah nor Tim had ever gone public, and they made it very clear from the beginning they were not looking for publicity. However, due to the uniqueness of their experience, they decided their story should be told as a possible warning to others and agreed to share it as long as their identity remained anonymous.

At the time of our meeting in the spring of 2007, Tim had been a member of the tribal police force for 15 years and was now assigned to the juvenile division. In his off time he worked with high-risk youth on the reservation. Sarah, a high school teacher, also spent hours volunteering in the high-risk youth program sponsored by the tribe. On any given weekend, the couple could be found chaperoning teen dances or supervising various program activities involving youth.

"Our encounter occurred on November 26, 2006," Sarah began. "It was our twentieth wedding anniversary and we decided to go to Billings for the weekend. We were both excited and looking forward to a couple of days away from the reservation and some time alone. Tim got off work around 4:00 p.m. on Friday evening. After he showered, we stopped at my mother's house and dropped off our dogs, Rosie and Renny. We were on our way out of town by 5:30 p.m."

She paused as the waitress approached. After the three of us had ordered the lunch special, Tim spoke up. "It was a clear night. We expected to be at the Holiday Inn around 11 p.m. at the latest."

"That way we could order room service before the kitchen was closed," Sarah interjected. "It might sound ridiculous to others, but going to the hotel and ordering room service before midnight is a real treat for us." She paused before continuing.

“Then while we waited for room service, we‘d go through the pay-per-view movie list and choose a couple of new releases and stay up half of the night and watch movies. It was an anniversary tradition. It was all we could afford when we first got married, and when we could afford more, we preferred to stick with tradition.”

I watched the couple as they described their anniversary tradition. Her hand gently intertwined Tim’s arm, and they often put their heads together in an affectionate manner. It was obvious that this couple not only loved each other but that they made an extra effort to show their love to one another. My friend described Sarah and Tim as two childhood sweethearts who were still in love. I decided that was an accurate description.

“It was about an hour after we left home. There are some sharp turns on that two-lane highway before the Interstate. As we came around one corner, we came upon some dead cattle along the side of the road,” Tim said.

“And with Tim being the policeman that he is,” Sarah interrupted, “he insisted that we stop.”

“I retrieved my handgun from the console and a portable spotlight that I carry with me for emergencies,” Tim continued, “and got out of the pickup. The first thing I noticed was that the air smelled different. Metallic is the best word I can use to describe it. It was like being in a machine shop where metal is being filed. I counted three dead cattle. It was obvious that something strange had occurred. Various incisions had been made in the animals. Eye sockets were without eyes; ears were missing, skin was shaved from the legs of two of the cattle; and one of the cows had all four legs missing. A head was sheared off and missing from the third cow. The strangest thing was that there was no evidence of a struggle. There was no blood on the ground where the deadly acts were supposedly committed. There were no footprints and I found that strange because the grass was almost waist-high and there

should have had some signs of the culprits, but there was nothing."

Tim paused as the waitress placed drinks in front of us. "The strangest part of the whole scene was that it was not like a butcher chopped off a head or an ear, these were precise cuts, very smooth."

Sarah picked up the story. "When Tim got back in the truck, we decided we should report the event to someone, and while we were trying to decide what to do, I heard Tim say, 'Look at that!' I turned and looked out the windshield in the direction he was pointing. I couldn't see anything. I leaned down toward his lap and that's when I saw it. A dim light was moving just behind the trees. As I lay there watching the light, I saw it moving toward us. Tim tried to start the pickup, but when he turned the key in the ignition, nothing happened. I was really scared. I reached for my cell phone, but there was no reception."

"We watched the light for a few moments," Tim explained. "That's when we realized it was more than a light. It looked like a large cylindrical propane tank. It moved full circle around the vehicle as if studying us. It was huge. The length of a football field at least."

The waitress brought our food and for a few minutes we ate without talking.

"I was frightened," Sarah said. "There was no question about it. I told Tim we had to leave, but every time he tried the key, the ignition did not respond. That's about the time, the craft settled over the pickup, shining lights so bright that it blinded us. I reached for Tim's hand and that is the last thing I remember, until we found ourselves sitting in the truck, on the opposite side of the highway from where we originally parked. The craft had disappeared, but even more perplexing, the cattle were gone too."

"I walked up and down the road shining the spotlight in every

direction and there were no cattle," Tim said, shaking his head in disbelief.

"Tim got back in the pickup," Sarah continued. "We were both baffled that the cows disappeared. Tim reached down and turned the key in the ignition and the truck started immediately. We got back on the road and drove toward Billings. I don't think we said a word all the way there." Tim nodded in agreement.

"When we arrived at the Holiday Inn and registered, we asked about room service. The clerk said that the restaurant would not open until 6 a.m. We looked at our watches. It was 3 a.m," Tim said.

"We were both shocked. We should have arrived at the hotel by 11 p.m. even with the stop beside the road to investigate the dead cattle. That's when we realized that there were four hours of time that we were missing," Sarah said. "I've heard of Betty and Barney Hill. One of my students found an old book in the library and brought it to class one day and asked me about it. Later, I read the book. Although it was entertaining, I discounted it. I figured that someone had come up with a way to make tons of money selling books and collecting fees for speeches. It never occurred to me in a million years that their story was the truth. And yet, we sit here with you, telling you about four hours of missing time and mutilated cattle that sounds just as preposterous."

"But unlike the Hills, you are not going public with your story," I said.

"No, I'm a cop," Tim said. "Sarah is a teacher. We don't want to be known as 'UFO abductees.' How could anyone ever take us seriously if we announced we were abducted by aliens? Besides, her students would bug her to death with questions."

"Not only that," said Sarah. "What if a bunch of newspaper people showed up on the reservation? God forbid. We don't want anything to do with reporters. The tribe does not need that kind of

attention." She paused and took a drink from her Coke.

"Do you have any memory or recollections of what happened to you during those missing hours?" I asked.

"That's the most frustrating thing. We really don't know what happened to us. When we got to the hotel room, I told Tim we needed to take off our clothes and examine each other. I remembered that from the Hill's book, but we found nothing. No marks. No incisions. There was no evidence that we had been probed or punctured like Betty or Barney Hill. We had no rashes. No flashbacks. No memory whatsoever of what happened to us. We simply lost four hours of time on the highway. There was no explanation other than perhaps, we fell asleep, but that does not explain the dead animals, the lights, or the UFO. Nor the fact that Tim parked the truck on one side of the highway, and when we woke up or came to we were on the opposite side. "

"Something happened that night," Tim interjected, "and to tell you the truth, the only reason we wanted to tell you about it is that people need to be aware that something very strange is happening. You can tell them in your book. We are not a couple of kooks. We have no reason to make up a story like this."

"Also, tell people if they see something strange on a deserted highway at night, they should not stop. Just keep on going," Sarah added.

I spent the night in Billings and did some Christmas shopping. The next day, I followed Tim and Sarah to the site where the encounter occurred. It was about an hour from Billings. We pulled off the highway and walked to the spot where Tim saw the dead cattle. Off in the field, I noticed that a large herd grazed unattended.

"Shortly after we got to the hotel, I realized my gun was missing," Tim said. "I couldn't sleep once I made that discovery. We checked out of the hotel immediately and drove back to this

spot where the encounter occurred. By that time, it was daylight. We pulled off the road and searched for my weapon."

"I was the one who found it," Sarah said, leading me across the road and pointing into the barrow pit. "It was down over the hill there. It was like someone had thrown it away."

"But the strangest part," Tim said, "the gun barrel was melted." He walked to his pickup and reached underneath the driver's seat. "Take a look at this." He handed me the gun. I examined it carefully. From all appearances, the gun seemed like any other .357 magnum, but a closer examination revealed a barrel that was completely closed. It looked like it had been melted. It was a solid piece of metal. I turned the gun over and over in my hand and returned it to Tim.

"Whoever they are, they don't like guns," Tim said. He reached under the seat and pulled out a paper bag and put the gun in it and stored it away from view. "Fortunately, the .357 belonged to me and was not issued by the department. Otherwise, I would have had to explain what happened to it. I'm afraid that would have been difficult. No one would ever believe such a story. I have a hard time myself believing it."

Shortly thereafter, we said our goodbyes and I began the drive back to Billings and then on to Bozeman. With Christmas less than four days away, I had a few more gifts to pick up, but any thoughts of Christmas took a backseat to the vision of the melted handgun. It is something I will never forget.

Occasionally I see Sarah and Tim when I am on their reservation. She is still teaching. Tim has been promoted to detective. There is no question that their story is bizarre, but on the other hand, I saw the gun. Therefore I am a believer.

Chapter 2
An Encounter that Pre-Dates Roswell

Ancient Astronaut theorists maintain that Star People have been visiting Earth since the beginning of time. To support their claims, they often portray the legends of American Indian tribes as proof of human interaction with the Star People. There are also many stories of UFO encounters, crashes, and extraterrestrials by adventurers, cowboys, military men, and miners in the Northern Plains.

One of the more famous cases occurred in Montana and was reported in the St. Louis Democrat and in newspapers throughout the country. According to the article, on October 19, 1865, James Lumley, a Montana fur trapper, was about 175 miles above the Upper Missouri in what is now Great Falls, Montana. On his way to camp after a day of trapping, he saw a "bright luminous body in the heavens." As it flew, it burst into flames and exploded. Shortly thereafter, a strong wind swept through the forest like a tornado. The air smelled like sulfur. The next day, Lumley decided to investigate and came upon a path through the forest "several rods wide." At the end of the path, he discovered an object embedded in the side of the mountain.

Upon investigating, Lumley discovered the object was sectioned off, almost as if it had rooms inside of it. He said the markings on the object could only have been made by humans or other intelligent creatures.

Lumley's story was not the only one from the late 19th century. For example, according to the residents of Aurora, Texas,

the cemetery holds the grave of an alien who died in a crash in the middle of the town in 1897. In Tombstone, Arizona, newspaper archives reveal a day when cowboys shot at a giant, metallic bird flying in the sky. In 1896, hundreds of eyewitnesses reported a massive airship floating about 1,000 feet over the city of Stockton, California, on the night of November 18. The following night, Colonel H.G. Shaw and two friends were outside the city limits of Stockton when they came upon a large airship in a field. Shaw later described the ship as being cylindrical shaped, about 150 feet long and 25 feet in diameter and made of metal. He claimed that three tall, slender men covered in short white hair tried to kidnap them and take them onboard the ship. For the next few weeks, numerous mysterious airships were spotted all along the west coast, in western Canada, and even as far east as Nebraska.

As the country entered the 20th Century, the reports of flying disks and airships continued. In 1909, a Cavalry unit in pursuit of a gang of Mexican bandits in the southwest came upon a cave they had never seen before, despite being familiar with the region. Upon entering the cave, they discovered a number of metallic, horseshoe-shaped flying vehicles, along with a small collection of "little grey demons," presumably extraterrestrials. The horses became spooked by the ships and the creatures, and the Cavalry left the cave. Upon returning the next day, the cave had vanished and the ships and aliens were nowhere to be found.

Located in the states of North and South Dakota, Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana, the Northern Plains Indian tribes have many accounts about UFOs. The story in this chapter is told by a well-respected elder of a Northern Plains tribe. His encounter predates the crash at Roswell. Since I recorded this story, Harrison has passed, but the time I spent with them over the years, changed my life.

Harrison

"My grandfather took me to the spaceship in the summer of 1945," Harrison said, as we drove toward the ranch he had inherited from his grandfather. "I was twelve at the time. The Army Corps of Engineers came to the reservation around the summer of 1947 to survey the river and surrounding area for the reservoir."

"So originally, there was no reservoir," I commented.

"Right. There was a river that flowed through this property. When the Corps came, they confiscated Gramps' land and in return gave him some worthless land on the other side of that butte." I looked in the direction he pointed. As I marveled at the stark beauty of the windswept prairie, Harrison continued, "I spent every summer on his place from the time I was six years old. Mom and Pop both worked for the tribe and they didn't want me home alone during the summers. So every May I packed two paper bags: one with a change of clothes and the other with books, marbles, and my toy gun. My folks dropped me off to live with Gramps from June to late August. I loved my summers here, even the isolation. I was the only child for miles. I rode horses and herded cattle. Helped with the chores. Whatever I could do. As I got older, there were bigger chores and more responsibility. There was no TV or videos like kids have today. At night Gramps amused me with the ancient myths and legends of our people or we played checkers or monopoly. He loved monopoly. As I got older, I read books to him. He liked that a lot."

His conversation stopped as we pulled off the highway and drove along a path that seemed more appropriate for cows than cars. While I silently imagined his secluded upbringing, where even today telephone service and electrical failures often last for weeks at a time, I thought about our friendship.

I met Harrison when he was in his early fifties. While our

friendship grew to be respectful, it was far from an instant camaraderie. The two of us met about five years after I moved to the University, when his school district requested my assistance in applying for a federal grant. Harrison was my contact and the person responsible for escorting me around the reservation to meet and speak with various groups and parents about the application. He made it clear at the onset that he did not understand why the tribe had requested assistance. Despite his misgivings, I continued to work alongside him for a number of years, gaining his trust and confidence. It took nearly 25 years of visits before Harrison asked me if I believed in Star People.

"Yes," I replied. "Why do you ask?"

"Someone told me you collect stories about the Star People," he said. "I find that unusual."

"I've been collecting stories for a few years. I grew up hearing the ancient stories of the Star People from my grandmother. Everywhere I go, if I am among indigenous people, I asked them about their stories of UFOs and Star People. Perhaps someday I will write a book. I've heard some amazing accounts from American Indians," I said.

"Tomorrow, if you have the time, I would like to take you to my grandfather's place. I have a story about the Star People, but you have to see the location where it occurred in order to fully appreciate it."

When I accepted the invitation, I had no idea that Harrison had grown up in such a far-flung, isolated section of the reservation. We drove for almost two hours before we reached the dirt path that served as the eastern border of his property. It took another 45 minutes to reach the house.

"Walk with me," Harrison said as we pulled onto a concrete slab beside his home. I looked at the vibrant man who held out his hand to guide my steps. His graying hair fell in two braids near his

waist. At 77, he claimed that women were still attracted to him. "My braids are 'female magnets,'" he once said, jokingly. "Women can't resist them or me. Every time I go to D.C., I have to fight the women off. The only explanation is that they love my braids. That's why we Indian men know that our power is in our hair." All the time he was recounting the power of his braids, I detected the humor in his statement, despite the fact that I understood why women were attracted to him. He was a handsome man, even though the deep creases on his face revealed his years. He carried his six-foot frame with the agility of a man half his age. He took pride in his appearance, and I had never seen him without a starched western shirt and a pair of ironed jeans with a crease down the center and his perfectly polished cowboy boots.

"If you stand right here," he said, pointing to the toe of his boot, "and look toward the horizon, that is where the ranch begins to the south." I looked in the direction he indicated. The ranch was expansive. At one point, I stopped and turned 360 degrees. There were no neighbors, no structures, nothing in sight except an old one-room log cabin and a 900-square-foot ranch-style shoebox house, typical of reservation homes. Pointing to the log cabin, Harrison remarked, "My grandfather lived in that cabin until the day he died. Back in the early 1980s the tribe insisted that he participate in the Mutual Help Program and this ranch house was built. He stayed in it one night as I recall and then moved back to his log cabin. The main house stood vacant for years except when relatives came to visit. Then they would stay in the new house. Over the years, it suffered from the lack of attention."

"Did you say a spaceship crashed on this property?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied. "In fact, I saw the ship. I went aboard it. It was a long cylinder about 30 feet wide and 60 feet long. I measured it by pacing it off. Most of it stuck inside a butte, close to the water level," he said pointing to a reservoir that lay in the

valley below. “It was well camouflaged. You can’t see the butte now; it was covered by water when the Corps of Engineers flooded the valley creating the reservoir.”

“How did your grandfather find the craft?” I asked.

“The crash shook the ground so hard that Gramps thought the house was going to collapse. You can still see a crack in the foundation of the log cabin that Gramps said occurred when the spaceship crashed. The horses were so frightened that it took a month to round them up, and even then they were constantly trying to escape. At first, Gramps thought it was an earthquake, but when he ran outside he saw a huge dust cloud blocking the western sky. When the dust cleared, he saw the craft. It hit with such force that only a small section stuck out of the butte, but Gramps not only had a keen eye, he knew this land like the back of his hand. The smallest disturbance caught his attention. For the longest time he sat on the butte watching for any sign of life. He kept a vigil for days. Finally after a week or so, he ventured to the place of impact.

“Did your grandfather see any beings?”

“He said the star men who crashed survived and lived in their craft about five months before they were rescued. At the time of the crash, the closest ranch to our place was 10 miles away, and as fate would have it those neighbors had moved out-of-state days before the crash occurred. Gramps delighted in keeping the star men’s presence a secret.”

“How did he approach them?” I asked

“He went hunting and took them food, but he said they told him they did not eat flesh.”

“Did he describe them?” I asked.

“They were taller than him and white.” He paused for a moment and then continued. “Gramps was over six feet tall. If they were taller by a foot, that would make the star visitors over seven

feet tall. He described them as being so white that you could almost see inside them. I'm not sure what he meant by that except he said their skin was thin." Harrison looked at his hands and then at mine. "They had long slender fingers, much longer than humans. Their hair was white. When the sun shined on it, Gramps said it looked like a halo surrounded their heads. He said, that sometimes they looked like the angels depicted in the paintings of his Bible, except they did not wear gowns. Their eyes, too. He said they changed color depending on the light."

"That's an interesting observation. Did he make any comments about any other facial characteristics?" I asked.

"He said they looked like they were all related. He thought they might be brothers and cousins. They looked so much alike that he had difficulty telling them apart. He said he could not tell their age, but they all seemed to be the same age. Some had longer hair than others, which was the only distinguishing feature he mentioned."

"Apparently, he thought they were all male," I commented.

"I think that would be a fair assumption. He was particularly interested in their clothes. They wore a one-piece light-green outfit. He told me there were times he saw them wading in the river, and when he approached them their suits were dry. He told me he wished he had a suit like that." Harrison smiled, obviously remembering his grandfather. "When I think of the old man and how he viewed the star visitors, he did his best to describe what he saw. I'm sure if the same thing occurred today, the observers might offer a more sophisticated perspective."

"It sounds like he was very observant," I said.

Harrison smiled and nodded. "There were fourteen of them. Gramps was never sure if any died during the crash, but when I arrived for the summer, I went on board the craft. There were seventeen seats."

“Was there any sign that someone had died in the crash?” I asked.

Harrison shook his head. “None.”

“Did your grandfather have a perspective on the purpose of their travel?”

“Gramps said that he often saw the Star People picking up rocks and plants. At first, when they saw him, they vanished before his eyes.”

“Vanished?”

“Yes. Disappeared. He never discovered an explanation for that, but he wished he had that power,” Harrison laughed. “Gramps thought that was the ultimate trait—simply to vanish in thin air when you wanted. I can’t imagine how he planned to use it.

“As time passed, Gramps said the star men realized he meant no harm and they didn’t disappear when he approached. Overtime, it became clear to him that they were concerned about their craft. They did not want it discovered.”

“Did your grandfather tell you what happened to them?” I asked.

“He said they lived here from late November until April. According to him, on April 17, 1945, another spaceship appeared and he never saw them again. He knew they were waiting for a rescue craft, so he expected it. He told me their spaceship was one of four exploring the Earth. They had been dropped off by a bigger ship that was circling Earth.”

“Dropped off?”

“That’s what Gramps understood. The big ship would return for them but not for some time. They just had to wait. They were not afraid they would be discovered. They could make themselves invisible, but they could not do the same with their spaceship.”

“Did your grandfather see the rescue?” I asked.

“Apparently so. He said the rescue craft landed in the field to

the west of the house. It was exactly like the one that crashed. He watched as they prepared to leave. Each of the stranded star travelers came to him and bowed before they left. He understood they appreciated his discretion."

"Before they left, did they make any efforts to conceal the spacecraft or destroy it?" I asked.

"The spacecraft was no ordinary machine. Gramps said it had the capability to change shape and then resume its shape."

"I'm not sure I understand what you are telling me," I replied.

"When they crashed, the spaceship was damaged severely, but it made itself appear as part of the landscape. I do not know how to explain it." He paused for a moment and held his head in his hands. "Gramps said that when he first saw the spaceship there were dents and scrapes all over the backside and a big hole in it. The spacecraft shape-shifted and looked like a big boulder. He never knew how that happened." He paused again. "He also said that they tunneled further into the butte to conceal the craft so that only a part of the boulder could be seen with the naked eye. It matched the landscape. I actually saw that myself. The spaceship itself was silver, but there was a section where the doorway was and the back end of the craft that looked like the desert soil of the butte."

"So they could change the external part of the craft, but they could not get the craft to work because of the crash, is that correct?" I asked.

"Yes. They told Gramps that they could not control the guidance. He did not understand that at all and I'm not sure I do either. Maybe it would be like a plane without one wing or a ship without a rudder."

"What did your grandfather think about their ability to change the external part of the craft?" I asked.

"He looked upon the spaceship as a living organism. He

believed it was fixing or repairing itself. I never knew what to believe. I was too young and now I am too old to figure it out. All I know is what Gramps told me and what I saw."

"Did the Star People tell your grandfather the name of the place they called home?"

"They told him that they came from a star system in the Taurus constellation. He said they called their world, Enyan. It reminded me of the word, inyan, which coincidentally means rock in my language."

"Did they call it the Taurus constellation?" I asked. Harrison shook his head.

"I discovered that it was Taurus from a teacher in high school. The star visitors pointed out the constellation to him, and I asked my science teacher if that group of stars had a name. We looked it up together."

"Did they give him any indication why they were here?"

"Gramps said they were voyagers and traveled the universe observing life on other worlds. They had been coming to Earth for thousands of years observing, collecting data and noting changes. One day, they took him aboard their craft and showed him pictures from their home. As he described it, I suspect it was some kind of a TV or computer, but in my grandfather's day there was no such thing, so he was enthralled by what he called "a picture machine." He talked about flashing pictures that showed a place different from Earth. It reminded him of the Badlands, but with no vegetation. Their houses were underground. He asked them if it was Heaven, and they told him they did not have a place such as heaven. He was fascinated by the picture machine and went back several times to view the pictures. Apparently, the star visitors told him they liked the green of Earth, and they thought the Red Willow that grew along the banks of the river was quite beautiful in April.

They loved the water. On their world, water was underground: nothing on the surface. My grandfather frequently collected geodes for them. They were amazed when he broke them open to reveal the crystallized cities inside. They were apparently pleased to add them to their collection. Gramps also taught them the medicinal uses of the red willow and how to propagate it from a small sample."

"Did your grandfather learn about their spiritual beliefs?" I inquired.

"He told me they were curious about Heaven. I remember he said he told them two versions: the white man's Bible and the Indian version." He paused and laughed. "He often talked about the 'happy hunting ground,' so I suspect he told them all about that. When I arrived at the ranch in late May, the star men were gone. By this time, the entrance to the craft had been concealed, but Gramps showed me how to access the inside of the craft from an invisible door near the rear that was so well camouflaged that even the most astute observer would not have seen it. I entered through the door and examined the craft."

"What do you remember about it?" I asked.

"The craft was well-hidden inside the butte where it crashed**.** It was so well hidden that anyone passing by would have missed it. But if you wiped the dirt away, there was a smooth, dull metallic surface underneath. It was not round like a saucer. It was long and sleek like a rocket I had seen in comic books. I counted 17 seats; I sat in one and it melted around me."

"Melted?"

"The chair melted around me. My first reaction was that I was trapped and I was frightened. Just as I struggled to escape, the chair released me. After that, I tried the chair again and again. Every time it enveloped me like a warm hug, and then released me

when I wanted to get up. It was like it anticipated my desire to stand."

"Can you describe the inside of the craft?" I asked.

"Everything inside the craft was the same dull, gray metal, even the seats. But the seats, they were warm and comforting like an embrace. I expected the seats would be hard and cold. But they weren't. They were soft and soothing. I can still close my eyes and imagine the feeling." He paused as though collecting his thoughts and continued. "The surface inside the craft was smooth; the walls, the seats and floors, almost austere. There were screens and buttons and knobs. There were characters written under some of them. At that time, I did not understand them at all. Now I would say they were a type of hieroglyphics, but I knew nothing of those things when I was 12." He shook his head and took out a pack of gum and offered a piece to me. "There was another room or space behind the chairs. It was a smaller area and contained a huge round cylinder encased in a huge glass-like ball. I never knew what that was. I remember looking for weapons, but found none. There was a thick, slimy substance, like honey, stored in clear containers along one wall. When I lifted them from the shelf, they offered resistance like they were glued to the spot, but now I think it might have been magnetism. I'm not sure. I think they must have taken everything they brought with them when their base ship returned. The craft was clean except for those jars."

"What did they contain?" I asked

"I wanted to take one of the containers home, but the old man said it was not a good idea. He said that it could contain medicine not meant for us and that they should stay with the craft. I opened one and smelled the contents. The scent took my breath away. It reeked like a compost pile; like decaying soil and waste. Gramps was sure it was their medicine."

"How did this crash remain secret all of these years?" I asked.

“This is the reservation. An entire fleet of spaceships could land out here and no one would know. You have to remember the time, too. This reservoir was constructed in the fifties and early sixties. Even today, there are few whites who venture down this way and Indians do not have boats. It is too far inside the reservation territory for much traffic. Secondly, few people live out this way. It’s 20 miles from the highway, and it is not a place that attracts visitors.” He got up from the rock where we were sitting and indicated we should return to the house. “And besides, the craft was well concealed by rock and dirt. You had to almost walk up to it to even notice it. The way it was embedded into the rock and dirt made it looked like a part of the natural terrain. Then when the Army Corps of Engineers came and built the dam, they flooded the area and the evidence was covered with water.” He paused for a moment, and then added, “That is, unless the Army people discovered it and hauled it away.”

“Did your grandfather ever tell anyone about the Star People?”

“No one except me and I was sworn to secrecy and maybe a couple of his boyhood friends. He told me the land where they crashed was his land and as far as he was concerned, they were his guests. When the Corps came, he knew the Star travelers were gone and so he kept their secret.”

“Do you think the spaceship is still there hidden under millions of gallons of water?” I asked.

“When they came to build the reservoir, I was here. Gramps was upset that they were taking his land, but even more distraught that they had cordoned off a part of his land that contained the crash site. It was not long before they told him that he would have to evacuate his house until they completed the blasting. They put him up in a motel off the reservation for several weeks. I stayed in town with him that summer. We had two double beds and a free

meal pass at the local restaurant. It was an interesting time. Gramps behaved like a caged animal. He hated the motel and the restaurant food. We spent hours walking the dirt roads out of town. He worried about his horses and cattle. He was afraid they would not have water. Some days, when it was too hot outside to walk, I read western paperbacks or we played checkers or poker."

"When did you return to the ranch?" I asked.

"It was somewhere near the end of July. I remember it took most of August to round up the horses and cattle for winter. I worried that I would not be able to help him get the job done before I had to return to school in the fall."

"Had the place changed in your absence?" I asked.

"When we arrived, the landscape was totally changed. They moved tons of dirt. Where there was once a field, now there were hills. It was impossible to even figure out where the butte had been. Gramps believed they found the spaceship and hauled it away. He was probably right."

"Can you explain how the government could haul away a space ship without someone noticing it?" I asked.

"The government could have done almost anything and no one would have known it or questioned it, for that matter. Everyone was thunderstruck by the huge trucks and equipment that was brought in to build the reservoir. Sometimes people would line the roads just to watch the equipment pass. Anything could have been moved without people knowing about it. Even if they saw it, they wouldn't understand what they saw. Another thing to remember, it was a time when Indians were afraid of the government. There were those alive who still remembered Wounded Knee and Little Big Horn."

"Why did your grandfather believe they found the craft?"

"He told me that one of the engineers visited with him one day. He talked about the inaccessibility of the ranch. He asked

Gramps if he ever saw anything strange. I guess Gramps told him that he went to bed when it got dark and got up when the sun came up and didn't have much time for anything else. Gramps said he played dumb to his questioning but he understood the implications of the inquisition."

"How many times did you go back to the craft after that first visit?" I asked, changing the subject.

"Regretfully, I never returned to the spaceship. I wanted to, but Gramps said that it was a sacred place and we should not look upon it as a curiosity or something to explore. In those days, kids listened to their elders. I never went back."

"Do you have any final thoughts about what occurred here?" I asked.

"Indian people believed that Star People came to us in the old days. Some say they were our relatives; others believe they were our guardians. So, it was not unusual that a starship crashed here. As for me, it only confirmed what I already knew. The Star People existed."

"You are probably one of the few people alive who has been aboard a spaceship and can describe it," I said. He discounted the idea and told me there were probably hundreds, maybe thousands of others with similar experiences, but they just did not admit it.

When I asked Harrison if his grandfather considered the Star People friends, he paused and spoke thoughtfully, "I asked Gramps the same question. He told me they said they were not our enemies and they meant Earth people no harm, but that they did not want to be friends with the Earth people. They never interfere in the life they find in the universe. That is their way. Apparently that is the reason they were so concerned about concealing their craft. They did not want to leave a footprint on Earth. At least that is what Gramps believed. "

"One more question, what language did the Star People

speak?"

"My grandfather spoke English, but he was more comfortable with our language," he replied thoughtfully. "To tell you the truth, I never thought about that. I should have asked him."

By the time we returned to the house, the sun was moving toward the west and the prairie was shrouded in long shadows. "I named that butte Blueberry Hill when I was a kid," Harrison said, pointing to a small hill silhouetted against the sky to the north.

"After the Fats Domino song?" I asked.

"I think it was before Fats Domino," he laughed, "although I liked that song." He laughed again. "Actually, I spent hours up there picking wild blueberries when I was a boy. That's where my grandfather and his father are buried. I buried my Dad up there last summer. My wife, Mary, is there too. It will be my resting place when I go." As darkness fell and we prepared to leave, our eyes were glued to the sky as we talked about how times had brought so many changes to the reservation. I looked at the Milky Way, which is known to be the focus of many indigenous legends. Harrison pointed to a cluster of stars without saying a word. I recognized Pleiades, the home of the ancient ancestors.

"I forgot to mention. Gramps believed the Star People came from Pleiades, but that they just had another name for it."

Sometimes at night when I look up at the night sky, I think of Harrison. His grandfather was right. The Star People do come from Pleiades; at least, that is what my Grandmother also told me.

Chapter 3
Sometimes They Come for Families

In 1930, a fur trapper named Arnaud Laurent and his son saw a strange light and an unusual aircraft crossing the northern sky toward Lake Anjikuni in northern Canada. The trappers described the object as cylindrical or bullet-shaped. Shortly thereafter, Joe Labelle, another trapper, snowshoed to the Eskimo fishing village of Anjikuni. The village, home to 2,000 Eskimos, appeared unnaturally silent when he arrived. He visited every hut and storehouse and found blackened stew pots, but no people. Inexplicably, he did not find a single human track in the settlement. Labelle, concerned about the missing people, went directly to a telegraph office and reported the mystery to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Several hours later, the Mounties arrived and were baffled by the mass disappearance of the villagers.

A search party looked for the missing villagers, but they were never found. The sled dogs belonging to the Eskimos were found buried under a 12-foot snowdrift at the perimeter of the camp. All of them had starved to death. The search party also discovered untouched provisions and food in the huts.

Later, that night, the Mounties stared in wonder as a strange blue glow lit up the horizon and skirted across the sky. The extraordinary radiance beamed a steady, pulsating light, unlike the Northern Lights that frequented that part of Canada. Newspapers throughout the world reported the baffling disappearance of the 2,000 Eskimos. Many people believed there would be a rational explanation for the disappearance, but the Anjikuni group

disappearance remains unsolved. Today, stories are still told in the Eskimo communities about the UFO that abducted an entire village.

While this event in Canada is rare and unusual, there are encounters spoken about on reservations where entire families have disappeared without a trace. Just as in the case of the Canadian disappearance, these events occurred simultaneously with the emergence of a mysterious craft. During the course of my research, I was told about two such events. On one occasion a family of 14 disappeared, leaving behind plates that had been filled on the dinner table, a television blaring in the bedroom, and an oven that had not been turned off. Despite years of searching, no family member was ever located, but their relatives can show you a burned out circle on the ground where they believe a spacecraft landed and spirited them away.

In this chapter, a similar event is described. On this occasion, however, Star People revisited the site of the disappearance several years later, in search of an item left behind.

Luther

"Are you afraid of guns?" Luther asked when I got out of my car. He carried a shotgun in his right hand and a .22 rifle rested across his left shoulder.

"Not afraid," I said as I picked up a grocery bag containing some stew meat, vegetables, and a pouch of tobacco. "I've shot a few guns in my time," I said. "I grew up in a house of hunters."

He smiled and raised the .22 to his shoulder and pulled the trigger. I saw a prairie dog flop about a foot in the air and come to rest near his newly made hole. "Prairie dogs are running me out of my home," Luther explained. "When I kill one, two appear to make up for him. This schoolteacher down in the village told me that, in some places, they are protected creatures. Can you imagine

that?" He didn't wait for me to respond. Instead, he raised the rifle again and shot. I did not have to look. I knew the bullet had met the target.

"I have some meat and vegetables for stew. Would you like for me to put it in your refrigerator?"

"Can you cook?" he asked.

"Of course, I can cook," I replied.

"Then cook." I opened the screen door and entered the small two-room log cabin. I found a large pot on the stove and dumped the beef inside. While the beef browned, I washed the potatoes, peeled two onions, poured in six cups of water, chopped some carrots, potatoes and celery, and added salt and pepper. I remained in the kitchen until the water boiled. I turned the burner on low, pulled back the curtains above the sink, and looked for Luther. I spotted him pursuing his prey in a nearby field. I decided to wash the dishes, all the time wondering if Luther would talk to me about the Star People or if he just needed a housekeeper. I roamed into the bedroom, made his bed, and opened the windows to allow for a little airflow.

Luther lived a secluded life on a remote section of the reservation less than a hundred miles from the North Dakota line. Harrison (Chapter 2) suggested I visit him. He described Luther as a good friend and an honest man. "If he tells you something, you can believe it. I've never known him to lie or even speak poorly of anyone. He told me that he had an encounter once with two star men. I told him about you and he agreed to meet you. He appears gruff but he is all bark and no bite. Just let him tell you his story in his own way."

It was the summer of 2007 when I finally made my way to Luther's doorstep. After I completed the household chores, I wandered outside as Luther returned from his hunt. "Have you ever eaten prairie dog stew?" he asked.

“I ate prairie dog in Peru, but it was roasted. Not in a stew,” I replied.

“You know they’re from the rat family, right?”

“I know,” I replied as I followed him into the house. “I try not to think about it when I’m eating them.”

“When I was a boy, we ate prairie dog. Sometimes that’s all we had to eat. Prairie dogs, a few wild turnips, and onions. Now I shoot them to keep them from destroying my place.” Luther motioned for me to sit at the kitchen table. His coarse silver white hair and stooped gait hinted at his advanced years and a lifetime of hard work. I watched him shuffle to the stove. He paused and lifted the lid to the stew pot and smiled approvingly. Then he picked up the coffee pot and two cups and returned to the table. Once he was settled across from me, he smiled and I noted that despite his age, his eyes were sharp and clear, a necessary asset for a sharp shooter. “I had cataract surgery two years ago,” he said. “Now I can shoot like a 20 year old.”

“Your friend, Harrison, told me that you were about 20 years old when you had an encounter with the Star People. He said you saw two spacemen. Would you be willing to tell me about it?” I asked.

“Did you see the reservoir when you drove in?” he asked. I nodded. “That was once a river, but the government dammed it upstream and turned it into a lake. I guess they wanted to make a place for the white people to fish and ride around in boats. A lot of land around here was flooded. It was originally Indian land. People were told they had to move. One of the places that was flooded was sacred to the people. The old ones said that the Star People left messages for the people at that site, but once it flooded, there were no more messages. The Star People quit visiting. Sometimes when people disappeared on the reservation, it was said that the Star People had taken them away to live in the stars.

Once a whole family disappeared."

"When did that happen?" I asked.

"I was a young man when the family disappeared. The disappearance happened right after I got home from the war, probably around 1946 or '47 maybe. They were never found. When their relatives went to visit they found everything just like they got up in the middle of dinner and walked away. Food on the table and everything seemed in order, except the family. There were seven of them in all; they were gone. No one on the reservation ever saw them again. They held a ceremony and the Holy man said that they were taken to live among the Star People."

"Did anyone contact the authorities?" I asked.

"What authorities? In those days nobody cared if a bunch of Indians died or disappeared. People had not much use for Indians in these parts. Still don't, but then that's another story. I'm sure you've noticed it in your travels."

I nodded and sipped the black coffee. "Harrison told me you saw a space craft. Can you tell me about that?" I asked.

"It was shortly after the dam was built. Maybe five or six years or so after the family disappeared. I was down by the lake one evening. The horses went there to drink in the evenings and I wanted to harness Peanuts and put him in the barn. It was just about dusk. Suddenly the hair on my body stood up like an electrical shock. I looked around and that's when I saw it. A huge object came in over the butte to the north of the property. It came slowly. It was the size of a battleship."

"Did you say it was a big as a battleship?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied. "And I knew the size of a battleship. I was in the war and I saw battleships. It was all lighted up on the bottom. It made no sound."

"What did you do?"

"I sat down on the edge of the lake and watched. The horses

ran away. I was alone. The craft moved to the center of the lake and just stayed there without moving. It was suspended in mid-air. At some point, I started back toward the cabin. That's when they saw me, I guess. Suddenly a light came out like a searchlight and fell directly on me. I kept walking. I didn't know what else to do. When I got back to the house I went inside."

"Did you live here alone at the time?"

"I was alone. My Uncle had passed the year before. He left me this ranch. It was a year before I got married. I didn't turn on any lights. I went into the bedroom to look out the window and that's when I saw them. Two of them. They were in my bedroom. I stopped, frozen in my tracks when I saw them. They looked at me and seemed just as surprised as me."

"Can you describe them?" I asked.

"It was dark, but I could tell from the lights outside that they were about 5 foot 7 or 8. They were dressed in light colored uniforms that glistened when the light from the craft hit them. I started backing toward the door and they told me they wouldn't hurt me. They were searching for something. I understood it to be something they had left behind or left here, but they could not find it. When I asked them what they were looking for, they replied, but I did not understand what they said."

"In retrospect, do you have any idea what they might have been looking for?" I asked

""They said they were looking for something, but I couldn't understand what it was. They said a word several times but it made no sense to me. Finally they were satisfied that I did not have whatever they were looking for and they disappeared into the darkness. I waited a few seconds and went outside. The spaceship was moving again, but this time to the west. They stopped and hovered over the spot where the missing family once lived. Their cabin was submerged in water after the lake was built by the

government. I watched for maybe 30 or 40 minutes. The spaceship just hung there. No movement, no sound, and then suddenly it moved upward and was gone. I have not seen it since."

"So what do you think they were doing?" I asked.

"I have thought about this a lot. I think they came back to retrieve something left behind when they took the family, but the cabin was covered with water when the dam was built. They must have mistaken my cabin for the other place and came here to look for it. Sometimes I sit outside on hot nights and watch the skies. I wish they will return, and maybe if they tell me what they are looking for I will be able to help them." He paused momentarily and then looked at me with a smile. "That's my story. It's true. I give you my word."

"Did anyone else see them on the reservation?" I asked.

"There was a half-breed family that used to live up on the ridge. An Indian woman married a white man from town. You probably saw the old abandoned house up there. You drove right by it." I nodded. "The next day I rode up to their place, but they hadn't seen anything. For years after that, the old man would ask me every time I saw him if I'd seen anymore flying saucers. He never forgot it. I can still hear his laughter. So I never told anyone except Harrison. I still wonder what they were looking for and what happened to that family. I believe it was all connected somehow."

"Is there anything else you can remember about the event?" I asked.

"There is one thing. Something that always puzzled me. They had this stick-like thing. It had some kind of motor, I think, because I remember lights blinking on it. Strangest machine I ever saw. I had never seen anything like that and I saw a lot in the War. They held it and pointed it around the room. The stick must have talked to them or something, because once they pointed it in every

direction, they seemed satisfied that I did not have what they were looking for. They put it in a holster and left."

"A holster?" I asked.

"That's what I called it. A holster. Maybe they called it something else. It was this thing that was strapped on their side. It held the machine when they put it there. It reminded me of a gun holster."

"Were you ever afraid of them?" I asked.

"No. They told me not to be afraid and I wasn't. They actually acted like I wasn't even in the room. Just ignored me so to speak. They were all business."

"Were you able to make out their features or anything else about them?"

"Not that I recall. They were shaped like humans. I remember they wore gloves because I watched that stick-machine while they were in the room. I still wonder how it knew there was nothing in the room they were looking for."

I never saw Luther again after that initial meeting. Two months later, Harrison told me that Luther had passed away. He had just turned 86. Harrison said he was found in his favorite rocking chair on the front porch. He had been watching the night sky and simply went to sleep.

Chapter 4
The Man Who Shot an Alien

While there have never been reports of Star People abducting animals (other than the alleged connection between animal mutilations and UFOs), in this chapter you will meet an individual who firmly believed that a star traveler attempted to kidnap his dog. He also claimed the star man frequently haunted his place of residence in an effort to catch him off-guard so that he could steal his pet.

Chauncey

"My granddad is known on the reservation as the man who shot an alien," Susan said as she sat across from my desk at the University. "He would love that poster," she continued, pointing to the photo of a UFO with the words announcing: 'I Believe.'"

"Well, he is welcome to it," I said. "You can take it to him." I reached up and took the poster off the wall, rolled it up, secured it with a rubber band and offered it to her. She smiled and thanked me.

The next week Susan was back in my office to report that her grandfather, Chauncey, loved the poster. "He told me to tell you that if you ever get to the reservation, stop by and see him. He wants to thank you personally."

"I will do that," I replied.

About a month later, I set out on a trip to northern Montana to recruit students from the reservation to attend Montana State University. As Friday evening approached and my work was

finished, I decided to spend the night and on Saturday visit the man who had reportedly shot an alien.

Chauncey lived about 30 miles outside of the tribal headquarters on a remote piece of land a stone's throw from the Canadian border. He was 88 at the time and would live until two days shy of his 90th birthday. During that two-year period, I always found time to drive that 30-mile dirt road to visit him when I was in the area.

He lived in the same two-room cabin where he had raised 11 children and buried four, according to the grave markers in the backyard. He lived off the land most of his life, hunting rabbits, prairie chickens, and an occasional deer. He raised cattle while his children were home, but found them "more bother than they were worth" after they grew up and moved away. He had four hens that laid all the eggs he could eat, a cat to keep the mice at bay, and a dog to warn him of interlopers. Learning what he liked for treats from his granddaughter, I stopped at the store on my way to his cabin and loaded a grocery sack with a bag of hard candy, a carton of Marlboros, Maxwell House coffee, a box of Twinkies, and several cans of spam and Vienna sausages. After confirming the directions to his cabin with the storeowner, I set out to meet the man who proved to be one of the most unforgettable people I have ever met in my life.

When I pulled into the front yard, a big black dog, which I later learned was called Blue Son, came out to greet me. I cautiously opened the door when I saw Chauncey come round the corner with a shotgun in his hand. One look at me and he ordered the dog to sit. "You must be the University woman who sent me that poster," he said.

"Guilty," I replied as I approached him, extending my hand. I offered him the bag of groceries. He peered inside and then said,

“Did you bring any Coke?” When I told him I had a cooler in my Subaru with cokes and sandwiches, he suggested I should not leave them in the afternoon sun, but that we could talk and drink Coca Cola at the same time.

By the time we had shared a ham and cheese sandwich, several Oreo cookies, and two Cokes, Chauncey was satisfied that he had not only met some of my relatives at some period but that I was possibly related to him in one way or another. This, to him, meant that he could talk openly with me. After that, he offered to show me around his place.

In the back of his house was a private cemetery for family members. As we walked past his small fenced-in vegetable garden, he stopped and pointed to the corner and said, “That’s where I shot him.” I asked him if he meant the alien and he nodded. We walked back around to the front porch and sat down. As he opened another can of coke, my eyes were drawn to a rattlesnake tattooed on his arm. When he raised the can to drink, I saw the snake’s rattle wiggle. He noticed my gaze and explained that the snake was a result of a night of brawling and partying in Honolulu where he was temporarily stationed during World War II. “My old dog, Blue’s name is tattooed on my right arm,” he said. He turned slightly to show me his left arm. I saw a heart with the name of Blue scrawled inside. “That was for Blue Son’s great, great grand daddy.” He reached down and patted the dog at his feet. “If the alien had had his way, Blue would have been somewhere out there, wouldn’t you boy?” The dog emitted a rasping sound and laid his head on Chauncey’s feet.

“Perhaps you could tell me the details of how you came to shoot the alien,” I suggested.

“Maybe I should tell the truth, seeing as you’re recording everything,” he said smiling. “I didn’t shoot an alien,” he began. “Some of my grandkids like to make up stories, but I never shot

one. It's kind of a joke within the family. I just scared him, that's all." I detected a slight smile cross his lips as he gazed out across the prairie. "He was out back of the house when I first saw him."

"Do you mean the alien was out back?" I asked making sure to document that he was talking about a space visitor.

"Yes. The spaceman. It was after dark but there was a full moon that night. I heard Blue Son whining, so I got up, opened the door, and walked out into the yard. Blue Son took off into the darkness barking," he said nudging the dog. I looked at the dog. He rolled his eyes upward at his elderly owner and then settled back for a nap once he realized he was no longer the object of the conversation. "I caught a glimpse of the space man just as I came round the corner of the house. That's when I seen him. He was bent over Blue Son, and at first I thought Blue was dead. That's when I shot him or shot at him."

"What happened after you shot at him?" I asked.

"He stood up and looked right at me. He walked out of the shadows into the light of the full moon. I was shocked at the sight of him. He was wearing a jumpsuit of some kind like little kids pajamas. The fabric was dark, but when he moved, it gave off a funny light. Something like snow when it glistens at night when moonlight hits it. Both of us just stood there and looked at each other for a few seconds. When he came closer, I saw a patch on the right shoulder and a wide belt around his middle. It was not an ordinary belt though. Instead of a buckle there was a circular contraption of some sort." He paused for a moment and shook his head in disbelief. "I was not expecting to see someone dressed like him out here in the middle of the night."

"Can you describe him?" I asked.

"He was the slightest man I ever saw in my life. He looked like a ghost, but somehow he explained to me that he was from the stars. I understood that he meant no harm and that he was curious

about Blue Son, but would never harm him. He had never seen a dog before."

When I asked him how the alien had arrived in his backyard, Chauncey explained that he had landed a craft behind the butte about 50 yards from his house. "I could take you out there, but there ain't nothing there," he said. "When the spaceman left, Blue Son and I walked with him to his craft. It was a small thing. Not big enough to travel among the stars. When I told him that, he said it was a small craft for exploring. There was a big one up there some place. It was his base."

I looked upward at the sky where he pointed. "So he told you there was a mothership up in the sky?" I asked.

"I guess you might call it that. He never used that word. He said a base. A base ship."

"You mentioned that he tried to steal Blue Son. Did I hear that correctly?"

"He did. Blue and I walked with him to his craft as I mentioned before. Along the way I ordered Blue Son to heel and it attracted the star man's attention. He asked me to repeat the order. When I did, he became interested. I showed him how Blue could sit, fetch a stick, and roll over. With each trick he seemed more curious than ever. When we reached his small craft he pointed to Blue Son and his craft. That's when I realized he wanted my dog. I shook my head and rested my gun across my arms. He understood."

When I asked Chauncey if he had seen other spacecraft or if his visitor had ever returned, he pointed to the shotgun leaning against the doorway and laughed. "I think they know not to come around here. I see plenty of them. They fly overhead. Sometimes they hover nearby but none of them have ever landed. When Blue Son sees them he sits at the door and whines until I open it and let him inside. Once inside he crawls under the bed and stays there

until they're gone."

When I asked him if he thought they were friendly, he paused for a moment and then said, "Well I can't say they're friendly. Anybody or anything who tries to take a man's son ain't too friendly. Blue Son is my only boy at home. He's the only one who stayed with me. All my other kids left and got their own places." I smiled at him and remembered my little dog who waited at home for my return. I could fully understand his attachment. She was like my child, too.

"What else can you tell me about the space man?" I asked.

He thought for a moment and then looked at me with a serious expression on his face and replied. "I think he was no different than our astronauts who went to the moon. I've had time to ponder his actions as time has passed. Do you think if our astronauts landed on another planet and found a friendly creature like Blue Son that they would not try to bring it back to Earth?" I knew he was right. Christopher Columbus captured indigenous people and took them back to Spain to parade them around before the queen. Therefore, it is not unthinkable that another explorer might choose a dog instead.

"When the star man discovered that Blue was intelligent and could respond to orders, he was curious. Maybe they do not have dogs on their planet and if they do, maybe no animal can be taught simple commands like dogs. Or maybe, they do not even try and when they discover a planet where people love animals as much as humans, maybe it fascinated him. He was probably an 'anthro' from outer space." At this comment, Chauncey laughed out loud. I understood his cryptic remark about anthropologists. So many had studied the indigenous people and made assumptions and published misconceptions about the culture and people they did not understand.

Chauncey told me that he had seen flying saucers or disks

since he was a boy. “They are common out here. Sometimes they fly in formation as though they’re practicing. Other times they hover over the ground as if examining things or observing. All people have to do is watch the sky. They are out there and they are visiting us. I don’t know their purpose. Maybe our government knows and is afraid to tell us. Maybe they regard humans as savages, pretty much the same way that the white man regarded the Indian when he came to this land they called America.”

Exactly two years and two months after I met Chauncey, he passed away. I attended his funeral on that cold November afternoon when he was laid to rest in the little cemetery behind his two-room cabin. Blue Son was in the back lying on the newly made grave. I walked to the back and petted him. I held his head close to mine and felt the grief in the dog’s demeanor. After the ceremony, I lingered and talked to his granddaughter, Susan. I told her how much I loved her Grandfather and thanked her for making me a part of their extended family. I learned that his youngest grandson and his new bride were moving into Chauncey’s cabin.

“What is going to happen to Blue?” I asked as I walked to my car. “I hate to leave him like this.”

“He will be fine,” Susan replied. “I will come out in the morning. My kids love him so I am going to take him home with me. For now, he needs his time to mourn too.”

All the way home, I could not forget the sight of Blue lying on that grave. I worried that he would become frightened in the night. There would be no one to let him in the cabin. I thought about my little dog and realized she was probably lying by the door listening for my car to pull into the garage.

Two weeks later, I happened to be back in the area again and I stopped by the school where Susan worked. We exchanged greetings and talked briefly about the upcoming holidays. When I

asked her about Blue, she told me that when she went to her grandfather's cabin the next morning, he was gone. Despite hours of searching they never found him. She ventured that he probably wandered off somewhere and died of a broken heart. She said she heard that animals did that sometimes. "Blue was almost ten and probably just didn't want to live without Grandpa Chauncey," she said.

For the longest time, I was unable to get Blue out of my mind. I was convinced the star man had returned for him. Once Chauncey was gone, Blue was alone. There was no one to protect him. After that experience, I never felt comfortable leaving my dog during my travels. When I traveled out of town by car, I always took her with me. When I was unable to take her, I arranged for a house sitter to stay with her. Some of my friends found my inability to leave my dog alone charming while others thought I was an over-protective dog-lover or just stupid. But somehow I always felt that if Chauncey were up there looking down on me, he would approve.

Chapter 5
An Alien, A Spacecraft and an Alaskan Blizzard

World-renowned scientist Stephen Hawking believes that extraterrestrial life exists and humans should be cautious about interacting with them. According to Hawkins, humans only have to look at themselves to realize that extraterrestrial visitors might not have their best interests in mind. He suggested that aliens may have used up all the resources from their home planet and are looking for new worlds to conquer and colonize. In such an event, he speculates the outcome might be much like when Christopher Columbus first landed in America, which was not a positive event for the indigenous people.

In this chapter, an Alaskan Native came upon an alien in the middle of the road during a blizzard. True to the Alaskan code of honor, he invited the alien to join him in his vehicle for fear he would freeze in the 70 degree below zero night.

Ross

"The superintendent told me I would find you here," said a man dressed in a heavy camouflaged jacket and orange knit cap as he came up to my table. "Would you mind if I sat down?"

"Please," I said, pointing to the chair across the table from me. "Join me."

"My name is Ross." He removed a heavy glove from his right hand and extended it across the table.

“It’s nice to meet you, Ross. Is there something in particular I can do for you?” I asked.

“I have a story to tell about an incident, an encounter, I had a few months back. It’s awkward to talk about it, but when I heard about you, I decided to look you up. I have never told anyone else about it.” Ross looked apprehensively around the room. The lunch crowd had disappeared over a half hour ago and only one stray traveler remained in the saloon that claimed to be the home of the best hamburgers in Alaska.

“Just take your time,” I said, as I looked at the menu.

“The superintendent told me that you collect stories about aliens and UFOs from Indian people. Is that correct?” He squirmed in his seat uncomfortably and watched as the waitress approached the table. I knew he was referring to the superintendent of the school district I was visiting.

“I’ll have one of your famous hamburgers and a diet coke,” I ordered.

“Make that two hamburgers, fries, a salad with blue cheese dressing, coffee, and a piece of apple pie with vanilla ice cream for me,” he added. When the waitress was gone, Ross turned his attention to me. “I run a snow plow. I have a 50-mile stretch of highway. I work up an appetite,” he explained, smiling.

“I’ve been working in the school district,” I replied. “I was on my way back to the motel when one of the high school teachers told me about this place. I just had to stop in for a burger.”

“Yeah, this place is pretty famous. The waitress is the owner, the bartender, and the cook, too. She even cleans up at night before she closes. She does it all. At night the place gets rowdy and loud. But she manages to handle the toughest characters.”

“You said you had a story to tell. And what the superintendent told you is true. I collect stories from indigenous people who have had encounters with UFOs and Star People. Someday, I plan to

write a book. So I guess my question to you is: Have you had such an encounter?"

Ross took off his coat and neatly hung it on the chair beside him. He was a big man, maybe 6 feet 4 with shoulders as broad as a professional football player. His shoulder length black hair was parted in the middle and tucked behind his ears. A silver studded arrowhead pierced his left ear. His red and black buffalo checked flannel shirt was open at the collar revealing at least three other layers of clothing, a sign of a man who worked outdoors in the Alaskan winters. In every culture of the world, it would be appropriate to say that this was a handsome man.

"I was born in Alaska, just up the road in a two-room cabin. I'm half Athabascan and half Aleut. My mother was Athabascan. In the summer, we had a fish camp on the river. We lived in a tent. Caught and dried fish. Lived the life of a wild Indian, you might say," he said with a grin. "My pop was an Aleut who was in and out of my life most of my childhood. It was my uncles, my mother's brothers, and my grandfather who taught me the old ways, the Athabascan ways. I learned how to survive in the coldest winters, where to hunt for food, and how to take care of myself. Above all I learned to stay calm and assess all situations rationally. That's how you survive. People who panic seldom survive a crisis situation."

"It sounds like they taught you well," I replied.

"I graduated from the University six years ago. I planned to be a teacher and basketball coach. But things changed. I've operated a snowplow since I graduated. My grandfather had the job until he died and then I took over. It paid better than teaching and coaching, and I felt I owed it to Gramps' boss since he had been so loyal to our family during my grandfather's illness."

"You were probably a natural for the job since your grandfather was a driver," I said.

“That’s what my boss said. When I was just a little guy, Gramps would sneak me out of the house and take me on his night run in the snowplow. I was supposed to keep him awake, but most of the time I fell asleep. The hum of the grader was like a lullaby to me,” he laughed. “He would wake me up in time to take me to the little café up the street for a McDonald’s rip-off McMuffin and a glass of milk and then drive me up to school in the snowplow. At seven years of age, I was the most envied kid in the school.” He smiled as he remembered the special time he shared with his grandfather. “For about eight months of the year, I work the roads. It starts in September and usually ends in June. The rest of the time, I spend on 50 acres up north of here. It’s a place I bought the first year I drove the plow. I’m building a log cabin up there. A place for my mom. It will be her first home that she can call her own.”

“Is that where you had your encounter?” I asked.

“No. It was during a blizzard back in February. It was on my assigned stretch of the highway.”

“Do you mean, two months ago in February?” I asked.

“Yes. Two months ago.”

“I was here, snowbound in the motel down the street, during that blizzard,” I replied. “That storm was terrible. Set all records from what I remember.”

“I was called out about 1 a.m. in the morning. It was an unexpected storm. It caught everyone off guard. The winds were upwards of 50 miles an hour and the wind chill hovered at 70 below. There are two of us who cover the 50-mile stretch of the highway. I start in the North. My partner comes from the South. We drive up and back over that stretch of the highway keeping the roads clear. Sometimes we drive 18-hour shifts. Sometimes more. We usually meet each other around Lucky Gil’s.” I recognized the place that he was talking about. It was a halfway inn consisting of

a bar, restaurant, and gift shop. “About an hour into the shift that night, I got a call from Bill, the other driver, that there was a strange glow up ahead of Lucky Gil’s. He asked if I saw it. Before I had a chance to respond, I came upon a disk setting in the middle of the highway. It covered the full two lanes. It was round with bright orange lights around the bottom. I stopped within 20 feet of it. I flipped my lights up and down. I tried calling Bill, but my radio was dead. Suddenly, blinding white lights came on and the craft moved upward and was gone. I watched until it was out of sight, but that was not long because the storm cut the visibility that night to nearly zero. When it was gone, there was darkness all around me.” He paused and looked in the direction of the waitress. She placed the food in front of us and asked if we needed anything else. Ross asked for more coffee. While I cut my burger in half, Ross took a huge bite out of one of his sandwiches. The waitress returned and filled his coffee cup, picked up his thermos and disappeared behind the counter.

“I sat there for a moment,” Ross continued. “I couldn’t believe what I had just seen. It was at that moment I realized my engine was off. I never turn off the engine for fear it would not turn over again in the extreme temperatures, but it was off. I held my breath when I turned the key in the ignition, and fortunately the engine came to life on the first try. I put it in gear and began to move forward. Just as I got up a little speed, I felt a bump under my right tire as though I had run over something. That freaked me out. I thought it might be something from the spacecraft. I stopped the plow and readied myself to go outside. As I tied the string of my parka under my chin, I saw a hand reach upward and pound on the side window. Then a second hand appeared.” He paused and finished off one hamburger. “It was the scariest damn thing I have ever seen. I swear to you. Those hands only had four digits.

“What did you do?” I asked.

“I turned on the light inside the cab and suddenly a face appeared and stared at me. It wore some kind of protective gear on its face, but I saw the eyes, big dark eyes staring at me. Suddenly, it turned and ran across the road to a stand of trees and disappeared.”

“Where did it go?”

“Just like I said, it ran across the road into the woods. I had no intentions of following it. Leaving a vehicle in a blizzard could have deadly results. I thought that was the end of it, but it wasn’t. Suddenly, the creature reappeared in the middle of the road ahead of me. Somehow I understood that it was cold and needed a place of shelter. I offered him to come inside my snow plow but he wanted nothing to do with it.”

‘How were you communicating with this being and why are you now referring to the creature as a male?” I asked.

“I don’t know. The creature seemed more male than female. Anyway he stood in the middle of the road and told me he was cold and it was my fault.”

“Your fault?”

“He said the vehicle took off without him. He was outside when I came upon the craft. In their haste to evacuate the scene the other crew members left without him.”

“What did you do?”

“I invited him inside the snowplow again. I told him I had to clear the roads and I could not leave him outside in the cold. Reluctantly he came inside, but not like you and I would climb inside. He just appeared. One minute he was standing in the middle of the road, the next minute he was inside the cab with me.”

“How did you feel about that?” I asked.

“I would be lying to you if I said it didn’t scare me. I was nervous and frightened. I just remembered what my grandfather had taught me and stayed calm. I went into survival mode, I

guess." Russ pushed away from the table as the waitress cleared the dishes. When she returned she freshened his coffee and brought apple pie and ice cream. "That was the longest night of my life. I made it to my destination uneventfully; all the time the space traveler was riding shot gun in the passenger's seat." He paused and then a smile crossed his face. "I think we must have made an unusual pair."

"What do you recall about the trip with your new passenger?" I asked.

"Once I made it to the 50-mile point, I turned around and began the journey back again. It was snowing hard. The roads were covered with another four inches of snow. On the return trip, the spacecraft appeared again, in the middle of the road at the exact same spot as I encountered it earlier. The star man suddenly disappeared. Within seconds, I saw him in front of the craft. The pulsating lights outlined his shape and in the dim light I detected a brief and simple salute or a wave, I am not sure, directed toward me and then he was gone. He just disappeared in the night along with the craft."

"Did you ever learn anything about why they were on the highway in the first place?"

"He told me the craft had malfunctioned. They set down in the middle of the road only momentarily for repairs. He was curious and had gone outside to do some testing of the snow. They didn't realize it was a highway because of the storm. When I came upon them, my appearance shocked them, and in their confusion they took off without him. They had not expected anyone to appear in the middle of the storm. To add to his dilemma, they were not allowed to make human contact so he was uneasy about being discovered. So they immediately took off, leaving him behind. In the process they violated several rules of their travel. He said they were a young crew and would likely lose their rights as explorers if

their superiors discovered their mistake.

"That's an incredible story," I said.

"It's a true one, but if someone told me this happened to them, I'm not sure I would believe them. It sounds fake, but it's not. I swear to God, it's the truth."

"I've heard some remarkable stories. None like yours, I will admit that, but I do believe you. Your experience, while different, simply builds on so many other stories that I have heard."

"That's another thing. He was fascinated with the snowplow and how it worked. He considered it a rather primitive machine but one that he was curious about. He told me that humans put too much reliance in oil-based machines. He said they should spend their energy on studying the use of magnetic propulsion for travel. He could not understand why our scientists had not gone in this direction."

"Can you remember anything else?"

"He had never experienced snow before or the extreme cold. He said on his planet, the weather never varied. He had never been so cold in his entire life and hoped never to repeat the experience."

Suddenly the door opened to the bar and two men dressed in heavy winter parkas entered.

"Hey Ross," one of the men called out. Ross looked in their direction and waved.

"Are you going to the game tonight?" one asked.

"I'm on call tonight," Ross replied. "The weather report calls for snow." The two walked to a pool table in the corner and racked the balls. Ross turned his attention back to me.

"Is there anything else you can remember from the experience?" I asked.

"Not much. The alien was quiet most of the time. I was lost for words. I didn't know what to ask a man from the stars, so I was quiet too. After he was gone, I thought of a million questions,

but when you are there and it is happening to you, it is different. “

“Can you tell me what he looked like?” I ask.

“He was a small in stature. He had a human form, but he wasn’t human. He could have passed for maybe a ten year old from a distance. His ability to appear and disappear fascinated me. I asked him about it, but he said that everyone from his world could come and go like that. He said I could do it, too. I just had to learn to use my brain in the right way. I didn’t understand what he meant.”

The waitress brought the bill and Ross reached for it, examining it. When I asked him to let me see the bill, he held it away from me. “My treat,” he said pulling his billfold out of his pocket.

“Thank you,” I replied. “I didn’t expect that.”

“I know, but I never expect a lady to buy her own meal if she eats with me.” He smiled and handed two twenties to the waitress who was clearing the table.

“If you think of anything else, I will be at the motel for the next two days,” I said. He smiled and nodded.

“There is one other thing. I’m not sure it is important.” He stood and helped me with my coat. “The day after this happened, a couple of military officers showed up at work and asked if anyone had reported strange lights or UFOs on the night of the storm. Of course, my boss told him there were no reports. I had not reported it and neither had Ed, the other driver. I thought it was best to keep quiet so I never told them about the star man. When the military showed up, I played dumb too. I didn’t want to lose work because of some government investigation. Besides, the military has too much control in this state anyway.”

“That reminds me. I wanted to ask about the other driver. He was the one who alerted you to the lights around Lucky Lil’s. Did you ever tell him about the star traveler?” I asked.

“We never talked about it. I never thought about that before, but he never asked me about the lights either.”

After receiving his change and leaving a tip, Ross walked me to my rental car and held the door open as I climbed inside. “Hopefully, our paths will cross again,” he said. “I enjoyed meeting you.”

“It was a pleasure meeting you too, Ross,” I said. “And if you see anymore UFOs, you know where to find me.”

“You will be the first to know,” he replied smiling.

I never saw Ross again. My research ended in Alaska in the spring of 2007, and to date I have not returned to the state. A mutual friend told me that Ross no longer operates the snowplow. She heard that he and his mother moved to the cabin, and Ross was teaching and coaching in a village near his new home. He is currently working on a second cabin, where he and his fiancée plan to live. Wherever he is, I am sure Ross keeps an eye out for the glow of orange lights on dark wintery nights in Alaska, just as I do in Montana.

Chapter 6
They Are Among Us

A number of sources have reported that human-looking alien visitors have intermingled in human society and are now living in major population centers. According to these sources, military and governmental agencies are fully aware of their existence.

George Adamski, the first to write about extraterrestrials living among the human population, described his extraterrestrial encounters in his book Inside the Flying Saucers. Though generally dismissed as a charlatan, Adamski claimed that the Star People looked so much like humans that they lived in neighborhoods unnoticed, held jobs, drove cars, and blended easily with the human population.

More recently, Sergeant Major Robert Dean, who worked at NATO's Supreme Headquarters from 1963-1967 in the Operations Center with a top-secret clearance, claimed he saw a secret NATO study that identified four different extraterrestrial groups visiting Earth.

On November 23, 2009, Luchezar Filipov, deputy head of the Space Exploration Department at the Bulgarian Academy of Science, held a news conference where he informed reporters that aliens were living on Earth at the present time. He maintained they were on Earth conducting surveillance and research. Filipov said the aliens are not hostile, but due to our lack of evolution and development as a species, they were unable to conduct any kind of rational communication with humans.

David Jacobs, a Temple University history professor who

studied the alien abduction phenomenon for more than 30 years, came to believe that the abductions were for the purpose of breeding alien/human hybrids who have now begun infiltrating human society.

In this chapter, an elder, who believed his ranch served as a drop-off center for aliens infiltrating the human population on Earth, tells his story.

Leland

In the summer of 2000, I met Leland, who was well known in Indian country for his handcrafted drums. I had gone to his little cabin, located on a rutted dirt road near the Nebraska border, to pick up a drum for one of my colleagues at the University. Thus, I had not gone in search of a story about Star People, but sometimes the paths you travel in life can lead to unexpected events that can change your life forever. Meeting Leland was such an event.

"I've seen 82 winters," Leland told me as he carefully poured a cup of black coffee in the cracked mug he set before me. I looked at his hands. Brown spots and swollen arthritic fingers revealed the signs of age and the hardships of a life of toil. He was tall, a common trait of the Northern Plains Indian men. His dark skin was set off by his closely cropped, coarse salt-and- pepper hair. He walked slowly and cautiously as he moved about the cabin. He explained that he had a "bum knee," the result of an accident that occurred while breaking horses for a rancher in Nebraska. In the corner of the room, I spied a hand-carved walking stick that no doubt steadied his pace in the outdoors. "I have lived many lifetimes," he explained. "I have been a cow hand, a garbage collector, a ditch digger, a bronco buster, a nail pounder, a cook, a rancher, and a warrior."

"That's an amazing life," I commented.

"My grandfather fought Custer. My father fought in World

War I. I was in France during World War II. I come from a long line of warriors. Back when I turned 18, an Army recruiter came to the reservation and told us Japan had attacked us. Me and my friends signed up immediately. We didn't even know where Japan was, but we went to fight them just the same. Seven of us. I was the only one who made it back. It was four years before I saw the reservation."

"Have you lived here all of your life?" I asked.

"I was born in this cabin. It was my Paw's land. I never went to school. When they were rounding kids up for the boarding school, Paw hid me and my brother. He said we didn't need to go to school. He said Mother Earth was our school."

"Where is your brother now?" I asked."

"He died of pneumonia when he was 12. It was a bad winter."

"How did you learn English?" I asked.

"I learned mostly in the military. Picked up new expressions and words from the radio. Now I mostly speak English. There ain't many who speak Indian anymore. I seen many things too," he said. "Things that most people could not imagine."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Let me ask you a question," he began. "Do you believe that people live on other planets and they visit Earth?"

"Do you mean UFOs and Star People?" I ventured.

"More," he replied. "These are not the Star People the old ones taught us about. The Earth is being invaded. I believe my ranch is a drop-off center."

"What do you mean by a drop-off center?" I asked, encouraging him to explain. He walked to the door and beckoned me to join him. As we stood in the doorway, he pointed to the field beside his house.

"That is where they drop them off," he said. "They come at night. They hover over the field. They lower automobiles to the

ground. They're filled with people. The craft goes away and when the car returns the next night, only the driver returns. They take the car and driver onboard their spacecraft and then they're gone again."

"What do you think happens to the occupants?" I asked.

"I think they take them to bus terminals, airports, or cities. Anyplace where they can live unseen."

"Don't you think they would stand out?" I asked.

"They would stand out around here. Everybody knows everybody and strangers attract too much attention. They have to take them someplace where a stranger can fit in. In the cities, no one would know."

"How do you know they are not human?" I asked.

"They look like humans, but they're not humans," he said.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"A few years ago, six to be exact, a craft came in, hovered in that field, and lowered a car to the ground." He pointed out a vacant area almost directly across from his cabin. "The car drove toward the highway, but before they reached it, they had a flat tire. I was watching them from the window there," he said, pointing to the kitchen window. "The lights were off in the house, but I could see as clear as day. It was a full moon, not a cloud in the sky. The driver got out and walked around the car. He looked at the cabin and then slowly moved toward it. I saw him at the door, but he just stood outside without knocking. It was like he either didn't know what to do or he was thinking about it. Finally I opened the door. He was a strange looking fellow. Wore a broad brimmed hat. Not a cowboy or baseball hat like Indians wear. He wore a black suit with a white shirt and kept pulling at his necktie like he was not use to wearing it. He avoided looking at me so I never got a good look at his face, but he had a short, thick neck. Almost no neck. Like his head set directly on his shoulders. Maybe that's why he

struggled with the necktie. He just stood there. I got a feeling he wanted me to follow him."

"Did he say anything?" I asked.

"Not a word. He turned and walked toward the car and I followed. There were three men and two women waiting in the car. None of them spoke. When I got to the car, he pointed to the flat tire. I took the keys out of the ignition and looked in the trunk. I found a tire iron and a spare and took it around to the front. I explained the tire had to be changed."

"Did he understand you?"

"He understood, but when I told him the passengers would have to get out of the car, so I could jack it up, he appeared confused. I walked around and opened the door and motioned for them to get out. They all filed out on the opposite side and stood in a huddle behind the car. They didn't come near me."

"So did you fix the tire?" I asked.

"I fixed it. Afterwards, I motioned for the passengers to get back in the car. When I started to leave, he gave me 10 silver dollars, real silver dollars."

"Do you still have them?" I asked.

"I sold nine of them to guy at the pawnshop for a hundred dollars. He told me he would take all I could get. But I haven't had a chance to get any more."

"Do you still have one?" I asked. He reached in his pocket and pulled out a silver dollar. As far as I could tell, it was a genuine silver dollar. I held it in my hands thinking that perhaps a star man had once held this coin.

"It's my lucky silver dollar," he said as I returned it to him. "It reminds me that I touched an alien and lived to tell about it." He smiled and I saw the pride on his face. I knew what he meant. He was a warrior. He had counted coup on an alien. "Counting coup" in many Plains Indian cultures was the ultimate expression of

bravery. It meant that a warrior had touched his enemy but chose not to kill him.

"Can you tell me anything about the passengers or what made you think they were not humans?" I asked.

"Well, they came in a spacecraft for one thing. They weren't friendly. None of them spoke to me. They acted strange. Like they were scared or they didn't belong here. The women were wearing those high heel shoes and had trouble walking in them like they had never worn them before. "

"Are you sure that the car comes down from a spacecraft?" I asked.

"I'm sure. They've done it so often, they have a car path through my field." He offered to show me the car tracks.

"When was the last time you saw them?" I asked as we walked slowly toward the field.

"It's been about four months now," he replied. "There for a while they were coming every couple of nights. Then they quit."

"What kind of a car do they use? I asked.

"They're always black. Big cars. Like Chevys or Buicks or something like that. I never paid too much attention to the brand, but I'm sure they're American."

"Have you ever reported the events to the tribal police?" I asked.

"What would they do? I'm afraid they'd tell social services and they'd put me in a home. They might as well send me to prison. I've always been free. I know what I saw and I know what happened." He pointed to the car tracks in the field. "That's where the spacecraft hangs in the sky, a car drops down like it's on an invisible elevator. It travels along this path to the main highway." I followed his finger as he pointed to the two distinct car tracks in the grassy field.

"Walk with me along the tracks," he said. I steadied him as we

followed the car tracks until we came to the middle of the field. “Look at that,” he said, pointing with his walking stick to a perfectly round barren circle. “Nothing grows there. That’s where the craft hovers above the ground. They’ve killed all the grass.”

I stood there in the afternoon sunlight looking at the circle and back at the worn tracks in his field, wondering what a skeptic might make of this elder’s story.

“Now what do you think?” he asked interrupting my thoughts.

“Something is going on here,” I replied. “And, yes, I believe you.”

As we walked back toward the cabin, I asked Leland why he thought the visitors were coming to Earth. He shook his head and looked off toward the sky. “Maybe Mother Earth is a better planet. Maybe they are coming here to learn our ways. Or maybe they are the Christopher Columbus of this time and they’re just waiting to take away from the white man what he took from us.” He smiled again, and I wasn’t sure whether he meant what he said or was just making light of the situation.

After drinking several more cups of coffee and sharing a package of coconut-covered chocolate snowballs, I paid Leland for the beautiful handcrafted drum I came to purchase. As I started to leave, he walked with me to my car.

“Just remember, daughter: Indians know about the Star People. They have been among us for years. But these star travelers are different. They’re not our ancestors. They’re here for another reason.”

“I’ll remember,” I said.

“If you get back this way, stop and see me. The coffee is always hot and black.”

“I promise,” I told him.

Over the next two years, I spent time with Leland every chance I got. His story about the star travelers never varied,

although there were times when months passed without an event.

Two months prior to Leland's death, I stopped to see him. His friend, Walter was staying with him at the time. I brought along a bag of groceries and offered to make supper while we visited.

"They're back," Leland said. "Two weeks ago. Walter saw them too."

"Do you think they will come tonight?" I asked.

"I don't know. They're unpredictable. They have no schedule. You're welcome to stay and watch." As we ate fried potatoes, steak, and eggs, and finished the meal off with Leland's favorite coconut-covered snowballs and strong black coffee, I listened as the duo speculated about the motive of the aliens and what their agenda might be. Walter, who corroborated Leland's story in every detail, felt that Leland was right about an invasion but he added a different dimension to the interpretation. He felt there were humans who were cooperating in the alien invasion.

I stayed at Leland's until midnight. Finally I left. It was a 60-mile drive to the motel and I had an 8 a.m. meeting with the school administration the next day. Leland walked me to the car.

"If you don't see me again, just keep watching the sky. It won't be long until I walk among the stars. If I do, remember what is happening here. If you get a chance, tell the world." he said.

I left that night with a feeling I would never see Leland again. Three months later, when I returned from a research trip, a message telling me that Leland had passed was on my answering machine at home. When I returned to the reservation later that month, Walter came to the motel to see me.

"I'm sorry you were unable to come to the funeral," Walter said.

"I was traveling," I said. "I didn't get the message until a week after the funeral."

"You became important to Leland over the past two years. He

regarded you as the child he never had. He told me about a month before he died that if he had ever had a daughter, he would have wanted her to be like you. He gave me something to give to you. I've been carrying it around."

When he pulled his hand out of his pocket, I saw the silver dollar. I took it and held it closely. "Leland earned this silver dollar from an alien," I said. "He counted coup."

"More than once," Walter replied. I knew what he meant. Leland was a warrior. Even today, Leland is often in my thoughts. I never visit a bus or train station or even an airport that I do not examine the faces of the strangers. I am looking for Leland's visitors. I trust if Leland is looking down on me, he realizes I am trying to keep my promise by telling his story and in some way it will serve as a notice to others that we really are not alone.

Chapter 7
A Star Traveler

Star Travelers are persons who claim to have experienced contact with extraterrestrials, but unlike those who have earthly experiences or abductions aboard spacecraft, star travelers are individuals who willingly journey throughout the universe with Star People. Typically, they maintain they have been given messages, warnings, or profound bits of wisdom by the extraterrestrials. These claimed encounters are often described as ongoing, but some claim to have had only a single encounter. They generally describe pleasurable or beneficial experiences involving human-like aliens, and often consider themselves as "chosen" to spread a message from a benevolent, advanced extraterrestrial civilization.

In this chapter, an individual, who believed he had been contacted by Star People and taken on board a spacecraft, tells about the warnings he received about the future of planet Earth.

Billy

I grew up with Billy. By the time I graduated from college, Billy was a struggling but talented songwriter who dreamed of being a famous country music singer. Even then everyone was aware that his alcohol problem was a major hindrance. Despite his substance abuse, he occasionally played in local bars catering to an Indian clientele. His celebrity grew when he came to the attention of a well-known artist who had a particular interest in American Indian issues. She invited Billy to be her opening act on a yearlong

tour throughout the Americas, Australia, and Europe. Thereafter, despite his drinking, his career skyrocketed, and over the years he became a popular recording artist and even went to Hollywood and appeared in minor roles in a couple of movies.

The last time I saw Billy, he was the performing artist at an American Indian art show in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He had a one-hour, late-morning performance and a one-hour, matinee performance for the three day event. After his first performance, I caught up with him. While I had not seen Billy for several years, the bond between us remained strong, and we spent the afternoon talking about old acquaintances and reliving events of the past.

"I should have listened to you years ago," Billy said as we found an out-of-the-way table in the makeshift dining area set up by a concessionaire for artists and their supporters. "If I had listened, I could have done a lot more with my life."

"I'm glad you are no longer drinking, Billy. That's what is important. It's never too late."

"I met a woman from Colorado eight years ago. She convinced me to go to treatment. Afterwards, we moved to Albuquerque and she helped me stay sober. It's been seven years now," he said, smiling. "But the alcohol has taken a toll. I'm not that old, but I feel like an old man some days."

"You have to concentrate on the good things, Billy. I'm really happy to hear you're no longer drinking." I paused and looked at him. "How do you handle not drinking when you're on tour?"

"I don't tour anymore. I play some national Indian events, but mostly I just play here in Albuquerque and Indian casinos in Colorado, Montana, and the Dakotas. I like playing art shows. They are alcohol-free. I get to see a lot of old friends. The sale of my album has been good and I'm working on a new one. I have loyal fans. They encourage others to buy my music. It's enough to live on."

“I’m one of those fans. I have your album. In fact, I’ve been waiting for another.” Billy smiled broadly. I realized time had not been good to him. His signature long braids had thinned and the strands were streaked with gray. His weight had ballooned and he subconsciously tugged at his polo shirt even though he wore a sport coat to cover his weight.

“Have you ever thought about using your music to teach others the dangers of alcohol and drugs?” I asked.

“I have a more important purpose for my music,” he replied. “I’ll tell you about it tonight. I’m having a get together at the house around 8. Here’s the address.” He handed me a business card. His home address was listed along with his telephone number. “I hope you will come. Come early if you can. I want to talk to you about the direction my music is taking. I’d like to hear what you think. My dad always said you were a woman with great knowledge and wisdom, even when you were a little girl.”

He stood and I saw his band members returning for the afternoon session.

“I’ll be there,” I said.

Five hours later, I pulled into Billy’s driveway. When I entered the house, I found Billy pacing back and forth across the living room, while his wife set out food for the guests. He was worried. “I’m afraid people will stay away because I told them my house was an alcohol-free zone,” he said.

“That will never happen. People respect your sobriety. They know what you have gone through. They’ll come. You know how Indians are; we’re always late. You of all people know about ‘Indian time’,” I said, joking. Billy laughed. “Besides, they aren’t due for another 45 minutes. You asked me to come early. Don’t you remember?”

“Of course. I did ask you to come early,” he said. “Come, I want to show you my studio. I have something I want to talk to

you about." He led me downstairs to the basement.

"This is where I work," he explained. I looked around the studio space that took up most of the basement. A number of guitars stood on stands in the middle of the room. Autographed photos with famous singers and movie stars covered the walls. I recognized John Denver, Val Kilmer, Willie Nelson, Robert Redford, Johnny Cash, Kris Kristofferson, Bonnie Raitt, Carol King, and many others.

He picked up a guitar, sat down, and asked me to join him. "Please sit here next to me," he said. I joined him on the leather couch and watched as his fingers carefully picked out a melody on the guitar about an Indian boy hopelessly in love with an Indian girl. It was a song from his first album.

"Did you know Black Elk carried a stone from a UFO experience with him all of his life?" he asked. His question was unexpected and I was somewhat surprised. I remembered reading about Wallace Black Elk, the Lakota elder and spiritual leader of the Oglala Sioux who had become famous due to a book, Black Elk Speaks, authored by John G. Neihardt. The book chronicled the life of the Indian medicine man and his journey into the center of the Earth and to other worlds. It also included narratives of Black Elk's visions, including one in which he saw himself as a "sixth grandfather," the spiritual representative of the Earth and of mankind.

"Black Elk was actually at the Battle of Little Big Horn when he was 13 and was present at the Battle of Wounded Knee in 1890," Billy said.

"Can you imagine what his life must have been like to have lived to see such changes for his people?" I asked.

Billy shook his head as if in disbelief. "One time, I went to Pine Ridge. I was asked to entertain at the casino there. They still

tell the story about a time when Black Elk was visiting his cousin Benjamin. He was in the sweat lodge, when according to Benjamin's family, a circular craft came out of the sky and hovered over it. Suddenly a stone penetrated the closed door and landed between Black Elk's feet. He picked up the stone but had to complete the sweat lodge ceremony before he could leave."

"I read that his cousin's family was on the porch and witnessed the whole thing," I said.

"That's true. By the time he was able to leave the lodge the spacecraft was gone. Black Elk carried the stone with him the rest of his life with his vision of bringing together all people of the four directions—Red, White, Black and Yellow."

"I remember that from the book, Black Elk Speaks," I replied.

"While I was in Pine Ridge, I met a holy man on the reservation who remembered Black Elk. For a while, he was disappointed in Black Elk because he converted to Christianity. But despite his conversion, Black Elk still carried the rock and he still used the sacred pipe. He told me that when he lit his sacred pipe, Black Elk would laugh and call his pipe tamper an antenna for contacting the Star People."

"That's an interesting thought," I said.

"Black Elk believed the Star People came to Earth hundreds of thousands of years ago from Sirius and Pleiades. He called them the ancestors of the people."

"My grandmother told me the same thing. She believed our ancestors came from the stars," I said.

Billy fell silent for a moment.

"Black Elk and the medicine man on Pine Ridge were the inspiration for my new album," Billy said. "I have been working on it for almost a year now. I have completed most of the songs. I just have to get them recorded. The album is like a long narrative

poem. Each song builds upon the next to tell the story of my contact with our star ancestors."

"I don't understand," I replied.

"I have been in contact with the Star People. They have taken me with them to other worlds, just like Black Elk. I have seen a new world, a world they have made for us."

"Are you telling me the Star People have prepared another planet for American Indians?" I asked.

"During my journeys I have been shown the fate of Mother Earth. It will be destroyed. The Star People contacted me and told me to warn the people though my music to get ready, because when the day of destruction nears, the Indian people will be taken in spaceships from this earth. Our star brothers will come for us and take us away to another planet where we can live as we once did, free of prejudice, disease, poverty, and alcohol. Just as the Indians were brought here to Mother Earth by the Star People, they will take us away from this dying Earth where we can live like free people again."

"Did the Star People tell you when they will come?" I asked.

"They said get ready and to tell the people the time was coming when we will leave."

"It's interesting you should mention the Star People. I have been collecting stories for a book I hope to write some day. As part of my research I have talked to indigenous people from all over the world."

"I hope you will include my story," Billy said.

"I promise," I replied. "Your story is similar to one I heard in Arizona."

"I've heard stories too. About a year ago, I met a Hopi elder who told me the day was coming when Mother Earth will be at war and the bombs will cause earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. He said their prophecies predict Mother Earth will be shaken and

eventually destroyed. He believed when this happened, spacecraft would arrive to take the Hopi to another planet. He said after all of this occurs, the next world will begin and the Hopi will lead the people out of darkness again," Billy said.

"You mentioned that the Star People will take all the Indians to another world. What does this new planet look like?" I asked.

"I saw it. It was just Mother Earth—but it was the Mother Earth of ancient times. There was wildlife, fruit trees, clear streams and wooded mountains, and fields of flowers."

"What did the aliens look like who took you on this trip?" I asked.

"Like you and me. They were our brothers and sisters who came to this land at the beginning of time. They started life on this planet, and at one point, the original space travelers left. They will be coming again, but this time they will come to help us leave this planet."

"How will they take all of us?" I asked. "There are over two million of us scattered all over this planet, 10 million, maybe more, if you count all the people who claim Indian heritage. Will they take the Indians from South America or Mexico? Do we have to meet at some particular location?"

"They know where every Indian on Mother Earth lives, regardless of the tribe. They will not leave anyone behind who is ready and willing to go. The first song on the album tells the people to get themselves ready because, soon, our ancestors will come."

"Could you sing the song for me?" I asked.

He picked up his guitar again and strummed. I listened to the lyrics.

When the song came to an end, Billy asked: "What do you think?"

"I think it is beautiful. You're right. It is your best work."

“Do you think people will understand it or will they reject it?

“Why would they reject it, Billy? This is your story, a story from your heart. Besides, do you really care what other people think? You are an artist and artists create.”

“There are those who do not want me to tell this story. I’ve been warned by some people in the industry that these songs could destroy my career.”

“All I can say is follow your heart. You know what you want to say and the message you want to bring to the people. That is what matters,” I replied.

“I knew you would say that,” he replied.

“Do you have another song?” I asked.

“I think this one will be the first song on the album. I call it, “The Appearance.”

I listened to the lyrics about the Star People who came to him on their ships in the middle of the night. It was easy to visualize his words. As he finished the last verse, Billy’s other guests arrived. His wife came downstairs to alert us, and our conversation about his trip to the stars ended, although as I left the party I heard him telling other guests about his journey.

During the next few months, my travels took me from Alaska to Hawaii and from one coast to the next. On one of my trips I returned home to find a package from Billy. He had sent me a pre-release copy of his album, which was aptly named The Voyage. True to his description, the album began with the sound of a spacecraft arriving and ended with the spacecraft leaving the gravity of Earth. The tracks were aptly titled: “The Appearance” and “the Exodus.” The songs themselves, however, were different. They were not what Billy had told me, nor did the album contain the song he sang for me that night in Albuquerque. While the melody was the same, the lyrics had been changed, and the journey

he described was one to the spirit world not to another planet. I wondered what had happened to the songs Billy told me about and the one he sang for me that night, but I never got the chance to ask him.

Although Billy and I had grown up together and had been friends through high school, our paths seldom crossed once we reached adulthood. I did not travel in Billy's circle, or he in mine. My world was one of academia and his was one of music. While I followed his career and bought his albums, I seldom saw him, unlike the days when we were younger and our careers were still new. He recorded one additional album after The Voyage, which was more popular than all the others. In 2001, I ran onto a mutual friend of ours in the Salt Lake City airport. He told me Billy had died. Cirrhosis had claimed him at 47. Although he had turned his life around, it was too late. He could not repair the damaged he had done to his body. I often think of him and remember the enthusiasm with which he spoke that night. I play his music frequently. I hope he has already found the place he described to me and is simply waiting for the rest of us to join him.

Chapter 8
Three Military Veterans Describe an Encounter of the First Kind

The first well-known contemporary UFO sighting occurred in 1947, when businessman Kenneth Arnold claimed to have seen a group of nine objects near Mount Rainier in Washington while flying his small plane. In the newspaper report, the objects were described as saucer-shaped, thus the term flying saucer became a part of the common vernacular.

On July 8, 1947, the Roswell Army Air Field public information officer, Walter Haut, issued a press release stating that personnel from the 509 Bomb Group had recovered a crashed "flying disk" from a ranch near Roswell, New Mexico. The following day, a press report by General Roger Ramey stated that, in fact, a radar tracking balloon had been recovered, not a "flying disk." This was followed by another press conference where collected debris was displayed for reporters and photographers.

Sightings of unidentified aerial phenomena increased, and in 1948 the Air Force began an investigation of the reports called Project Sign. The initial opinion was that UFOs were sophisticated Soviet aircraft. Within a year, however, Project Sign morphed into Project Grudge, which in 1952 was replaced by Project Blue Book. Headquartered at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, from 1952 to 1969, Project Blue Book was the longest-lived official UFO investigation. The project compiled reports of approximately 12,000 sightings. Ninety-four percent of the reports

were classified as atmospheric or artificial phenomenon. The other six percent were labeled as unidentified.

Meanwhile, UFO reports continued to be reported. This prompted the Central Intelligence Agency to encourage the government to establish an expert panel of scientists to investigate the phenomena. The panel, headed by H.P. Robertson, a physicist at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California, included two expert physicists, an astronomer, and a rocket engineer. The panel met for three days in 1953 and reviewed reports gathered under Project Blue book and interviewed several military personnel. They concluded that 90 percent of the sightings could be attributed to meteorological or astronomical phenomena. They also found that there was no threat to national security and no evidence that supported extraterrestrial intelligence.

A scientifically sanctioned investigation of the phenomenon was set up in 1966 at the University of Colorado. Headed by Edward Condon, the Condon committee's report was issued two years later. The report provided a detailed review of 59 UFO sightings and concluded that there was no evidence of anything other than commonplace phenomena. They concluded that no further investigation was warranted. Project Blue Book was dismantled in 1969 just as Americans turned their attention to Neil Armstrong's first footstep on the Moon.

The era of NASA and astronauts shed light on UFOs once again. While NASA denied the allegations of UFO encounters with American spacecraft, some astronauts over the years took issue with the official stance.

In 1979 Maurice Chatelain, former chief of NASA Communications Systems, claimed that Neil Armstrong had reported seeing two UFOs on the rim of a crater. According to Chatelain, every time the astronauts informed Mission Control about the objects, the agency ordered absolute silence. Chatelain

said Astronaut Walter Schirra aboard Mercury 8 coined the code name “Santa Claus” for the alien ships.

In 2010, Astronaut Dr. Story Musgrave, a Payload Specialist aboard the STS-80 Mission, reported seeing a disk-shaped object much larger than the American space shuttle Columbia. At the time, they were 190 nautical miles from Earth. Upon their return, Musgrave resigned so that he could reveal what he had seen. In November 2011, Ken Johnston, a former NASA Data and Photo Control Department manager at the Lunar Receiving Laboratory during the Apollo missions, was fired after he publicly revealed knowledge about alleged alien cities on the moon.

The individuals who tell their story in this chapter are three men from different tribal groups who, as members of the United States Air Force, witnessed a UFO event at a U.S. military installation. Within hours of the sighting the trio were separated and transferred to bases throughout the United States. Although nearly 45 years passed since the event occurred, each man recollected the event vividly with almost identical details, although they had not been in touch with one another since the incident. Their account demonstrates the lengths the military will take to conceal information about the existence of UFOs. This is the first time their story has been told.

Arlan

I knew Arlan for nearly 15 years before he shared his story with me. I first met him while he served on the interview committee established by Montana State University to participate in the hiring of a new faculty position that would recruit American Indian students and teach in the College of Education. I was one of the three finalists for the position.

Arlan served on the interviewing committee to represent the interests of the tribal communities in the state. A handsome man,

he stood six foot three and had the muscles of a bodybuilder. He wore his hair shoulder length with a headband. His boyish smile and polite demeanor endeared him to every woman he met. He always wore Wrangler jeans, a plaid shirt, and a leather jacket. I never saw him without his cowboy boots.

Once I was hired at the University, Arlan and I stayed in contact. Over the years, I came to regard Arlan, his wife, and children as part of my extended family and often had dinner with them when I visited his reservation. He frequently stopped by my office at the University on his monthly trip to Helena to meet with the governor's liaison on Indian Affairs. On one such visit, we sat in my office discussing tribal politics, when I noticed he was staring at the poster hanging on the wall. It pictured a UFO with words underneath it that read, "I Believe."

"Do you believe?" he asked, pointing to the poster.

"I do," I replied.

"I believe too," he began. "When I was in the service, I was in the Air Force. Most Indians join the army, but I joined the Air Force. One night the whole base was on alert. An unidentified object appeared on radar. It was headed straight for the base. Several jet fighters scrambled in pursuit. They returned but the base remained on alert. That meant we were all in full combat uniform and dispersed around the perimeters. Around 2 a.m., a spacecraft appeared. It hovered over the base for a good 30 minutes. There were windows where you could see shadows moving, like someone walking around. We all stood there, our rifles ready to fire. The order never came. The UFO just hovered there, not moving, not making a sound. One foolish airman broke rank and ran in the direction of the craft, shouting and waving his rifle in the air. A beam of light shot out of the craft. He was frozen on the spot. When the light retracted, he fell on his face. A few seconds later, the craft flew away. Two hours later, we were called

together and told it was a test and ordered not to talk about the event. I never did. I kept it a secret until this moment."

"Why now?" I asked.

"It's that poster. That craft looked identical to the one we saw that night."

"After the incident, did you ever talk to your buddies about it?" I asked.

"I never did. Within hours of the sighting, I was transferred to a different base. My friends were transferred out the same day. We were given 12 hours to prepare for our transfers. There was a lot of paperwork. We didn't have much time to talk about the transfers or about the UFO. Some of us exchanged home addresses, but you know how it is when you're 18. You think you'll write, but you never do. I never saw or heard from any of those guys again."

"That's too bad," I said. "It would be nice if you could remember their names or you had their addresses."

"I know their names and addresses," he said, "at least where they lived when we enlisted. I'll look in my footlocker when I get home. If they're there, I'll give them to you when I see you again."

On my next trip to the reservation I stopped to see Arlan. When I entered his office, he smiled. "I heard you were coming," he said, as he reached in his shirt pocket and handed me a yellowed piece of paper. Two names with addresses in Oklahoma and Arizona were printed on it. "These were the guys who were with me. I have no idea where they are today or even if they are alive. If you find them, tell them Arlan sends his regards."

I took the names and promised I would give him a full report, if and when, I found his long lost friends.

When the summer session ended at the University, I had a three-week break before the fall session began. I decided to follow up on the two names that Arlan had given me and take a road trip

to the south. In Oklahoma, I met up with some of my relatives who lived near Tahlequah. Through various contacts, my cousin who served on the police force found the airman named Max, who had been in the service with Arlan. I drove out to meet her. Doris told me her father and her mother divorced shortly after he returned home from Vietnam. She did not remember him.

"He sent child support every month until I was 18," she said, "but he never came around. My mother said the war changed him." She told me she had an address that was on the envelope containing the monthly checks. After a few minutes of searching, she returned with an address. I thanked her and early the next day, I said goodbye to my relatives and pointed the car south toward New Mexico where Doris' father supposedly lived.

Max

I found Doris' father, Max, living in a trailer on the north side of the Mexican border in the state of New Mexico. The trailer sat alone on a 20-acre piece of land that was mostly desert, cacti, and sagebrush. The area around the trailer was well groomed, and various desert plants grew among the rock beds that had been meticulously designed and created by Max. He told me that rock beds were a hobby and that he tried to use native plants because they could withstand the extreme heat of the summer. A large dog called Roger lounged in the shade of the trailer canopy. When I introduced myself and spoke about Arlan, he remembered him and was happy to hear he was doing well. I told him that I was following up on a story that Arlan had shared with me and that his daughter Doris had given me his address.

"Did you see Doris?" he asked.

"Yes. She is a lovely woman," I replied.

"She's one of the biggest mistakes I ever made," he said. "Not her, just the fact that I left Oklahoma and never saw her again. My

sons don't even know their sister. Now it's too late."

"Maybe not. She knows you supported her and sent her presents, so it may not be too late." I opened my notebook and wrote out a phone number. "Call her sometime," I said.

He took the note and stuffed it in his jean's pocket.

"Do you remember any strange events that occurred when you were in the Air Force?" I asked.

"Do you mean the UFO incident?" he asked.

"Do you remember a UFO?" I replied.

"Yes, I remember. The brass told us never to talk about it. In fact, they said if we did talk, they would come after us. They told us we had witnessed a top-secret test to determine how we would react under unusual and stressful situations. I never believed them. It was a barefaced lie, and they thought we were so inexperienced and dumb that we would buy into anything they told us. They said it was an experimental craft. It was all lies. Not even the big boys knew what that craft was or where it originated. They were shaking in their boots and the last thing they wanted was for the word to get out."

Max stopped and coughed. I heard his breath rattle in his embattled chest. "Too many cigarettes," he commented as he dropped the butt into the dirt and ground it with his boot.

I noticed his nicotine stained hands and remained silent as a cough racked his body. A wiry, sun-baked man who sucked on one filterless Camel cigarette after another, Max told me he was one year shy of 60, but he looked older. In cowboy boots, he appeared taller than he actually was. A soiled t-shirt from a Hard Rock Café in Cancun, Mexico, hung on his thin frame, and a pair of frayed jeans completed his outfit. His back was prematurely bowed and he walked with a limp from a bullet wound he received in Vietnam. The injury made him walk with a forward thrust of his

upper body sometimes pitching him forward. Several times as he moved around his yard, I thought he was going to fall on his face.

As he gained his composure and the coughing ceased, I asked, "Could you tell me what you remember about that night?" As I waited for his response, I dug in my purse and pulled out a package of cough drops and handed them to him. He paused for a moment, then retied his long ponytail and looked off toward the sky.

"What I saw, I will never forget. It was late at night. We woke up in the middle of the night to sirens. The base was on alert. I remember the night was cold. I hated cold winters. I much preferred living in Arizona or New Mexico."

I watched him unwrap one of the cough drops and put it in his mouth.

"Arlan, Hank and me—we were sent to protect the entrance to the base. We took our positions and waited for an unknown enemy. We must have been there for over an hour. I was cold and my teeth were chattering. That's when it happened. The craft came out of nowhere. Not a sound. Suddenly it just appeared, hovering silently over the base. We didn't know what to do. We were all nervous as hell. Our commanding officer told us not to fire, but to be ready to respond if something happened. This one guy, I don't know if he lost his mind or what, went running toward the craft shooting. A light came out of the craft and he was stopped in his tracks for just a moment as though he was paralyzed, and then he dropped to the ground unconscious. A few moments later, the craft moved silently upward and disappeared into the night."

"Did you say, that the airman was shooting at the craft?" I asked.

"Yes. He was shooting. It scared the bejesus out of me. I figured if a firefight happened, they would destroy us."

"Arlan did not tell me he was shooting. He said he was

waving his gun in the air."

"He was shooting. I remember it clearly."

"Did you ever hear what happened to him?"

"When you're in the military, you only hear what they want you to know. The official word was that he was in sickbay under observation. Everybody knows that just a fancy expression for crazy."

Later, Max confessed that he had difficulty adjusting to civilian life once his enlistment was up and he had re-enlisted for six more years. "A couple of years later, after I re-enlisted, I ran into one of the medics who was on-duty at the hospital that night when the UFO appeared. He told me that the guy was burned all over his face and body. He said he heard a doctor say it was radiation. He said they kept him in a sleep-induced coma for a while, and then they just let nature takes its course. He died within a month of the incident."

"Do you remember his name?" I asked.

"No. I never knew him. He was with a different unit and not housed in our barracks."

"Can you describe the craft for me?" I asked.

"It was huge. Bigger than anything I had ever seen. It just hung there in the sky. Like it was suspended on strings. It made no sound. I would say it was probably about 50 or 60 feet around. Maybe 25-to-35 feet tall. There were windows but you couldn't see through them. Very small windows but only a dull light emitted from them. The craft was gray metal, perfectly smooth. No angles. Just a perfect circle. It was dark but all the lights at the base were on so we had a good view. I couldn't see any seams on the craft. That was unusual. It was like it was one piece or there was a skin stretched over it to make it look that way."

"Were there any lights?"

"I saw blue and white lights when it hovered over the base.

There were reddish-orange flashing lights that came on as it moved away. It flew upward at first and then disappeared into the night sky within seconds."

"Have you ever encountered another UFO?" I asked.

"We saw them in Vietnam sometimes. Frequently we would see several at a time, but they never came close. They just flew over, sometimes in formation. It was like they were observing the war. The pilots talked among themselves. Those of us who worked on the planes heard their conversations. The pilots were concerned about the UFOs. At first they thought they were some kind of communist aircraft sent to scare us out of Vietnam. There were stories of jets that crashed when they pursued them, but most pilots knew what we all knew: these craft were not from this planet. We were no match for them."

"Did the Air Force ever officially speak out about them?" I asked.

"Never. About two years ago, there was a sighting of a UFO near here on the Mexican border. I heard the Air Force was out in full force. They called it swamp gas. Guess the Air Force forgot there ain't no swamps in the desert," he chuckled.

"Did you ever talk to anyone about the UFO event at the base?" I asked.

"After I re-enlisted, I talked to a military psychologist who wanted to give me some kind of shock treatments. That's when I knew I was in trouble. I told him at our next meeting that I had been smoking pot. Two days later they sent me to Hawaii. From there I was Vietnam bound. I spent the next four years in the jungles of Vietnam tracking movements of the Viet Cong when I wasn't working on airplanes. I guess they thought I was a good tracker because I was Indian. Most of that time I was alone. Eventually, I was sent to Greenland to finish out my enlistment. When my stint was up, I never re-enlisted. I considered myself

lucky. If they had given me shock treatments, I would have probably ended up in some hospital ward in Texas where they take wackos."

"You mean the military has a hospital in Texas for mentally ill veterans?" I ask.

"Wackos and AIDS patients. At least that's what I heard."

"Were you a pot smoker in the military?" I asked.

"I got introduced to 'wacky tobaccy' in Vietnam. I did not smoke pot at the time of the UFO incident. Smoking in Vietnam was a requirement. Otherwise there would have been a major rebellion among the troops. That's why the military never stopped us from smoking. It kept us calm and compliant." He shook his head as in disbelief and lit up another cigarette. "After I left the military, I never smoked again. I smoke cigarettes and an occasional cigar but to my knowledge they do not cause hallucinations. And I have never taken illegal drugs either. I got married twice once I settled here. Both Mexican gals. Had boys by each. I had to stay sober for my sons."

"Have you ever considered going public with your experience?" I asked.

"Never," he replied. "And don't go telling anyone about me. I am only telling you this because of Arlan. He covered my back many times. Besides, if you write a book, I want to make sure that someone knows that this story is not one man's imagination. Just keep me anonymous."

Later, Max cooked steaks and baked corn on a barbecue grill, and invited me to join him. We continued our conversation long into the night.

The next morning, I drove out to his place. Max's sons were both sitting with their Dad under an umbrella table that looked like it had been retrieved from a dump. When I approached with a box of sweet rolls, Luis, Max's older son, retrieved a fresh pot of

coffee and a cup for me. Geronimo, the youngest son, had recently graduated from college and had taken a job with a bank in Roswell. He was due to report to work in two weeks. He smiled broadly as his father introduced him and bragged that he was a Dean's list student. Over the course of our breakfast together, it became clear that the boys loved and respected Max. Luis proclaimed he was more like his father than Geronimo. "I like the solitary life, like Dad," he declared. "Gerry likes to be in the middle of the action." Both boys agreed that was a good description of their personalities.

"I never told my boys about the UFO until this morning," Max declared, as he drained his cup of coffee. "I never wanted them to know anything about it in case the military ever came around. The brass told us that the whole event had been made up to see how we would react to something that was unknown. They tried to make us believe that it was all a hoax. We knew what we had seen, but they didn't give us a chance to talk about it. They shipped our butts out to parts unknown. We hardly had time to pack our bags before we were on planes and buses headed for another base. I never saw any of those guys I served with that night."

When I told him about Arlan and his work, Max smiled. "Arlan was always the level-headed one of the group. He was a good man. I felt lucky to have such a friend."

"I think Arlan was lucky too," I replied. I looked at his sons and they both smiled broadly and nodded. Later that morning, I said my goodbyes and pointed my car toward Arizona to find Hank, the second airman on Arlan's list.

Hank

I met Hank at the community cultural center on his reservation. His office was decorated with arts and crafts collected over the years from artisans of his tribe. Photos displayed on his

desk revealed a proud father and grandfather. When I introduced myself and told him about Arlan, a big smile crossed his face. I explained that Arlan had given me his name and that he had asked that I look him up and ask him to tell me about the UFO they encountered when they were stationed together in the Air Force.

After offering me a chair and a cup of tea, he began. "So you know my old friend Arlan. A lot of time has passed since we were in the Air Force. We were just boys back then. There were three of us stationed there...three Indians. Most Indians join the Army, but the three of us were an anomaly. We joined the Air Force and ended up stationed together. We slept in the same barracks together. Our Sarge called us 'the three musketeers,' and sometimes that is how we felt. In those days, there was racism in the Air Force, so the three of us stuck together. We hit it off right away. We had more in common, though, than just being Indians. We wanted to be pilots, but those aspirations evaporated after we found out the requirements. We ended up in the machinist depot repairing planes instead of flying them."

"Arlan told me the same thing," I replied. "It's interesting that the two of you never saw each other again. You have a lot in common. Both of you work to preserve your tribal cultures. Arlan is a highly regarded expert on the language and culture of his tribe. He runs a center very similar to this one."

"Arlan and I have always been together in spirit," he said. "We were like brothers. We looked out for Max. He was different. He didn't take to military life too well. He was a loner. He didn't like being cooped up in a barracks with lots of people around. He was younger than us. We always treated him like a little brother."

When I told him that I met Max and that he had reenlisted for another six years after he had completed his first tour of duty, Hank was surprised.

"I never figured he would do that," Hank responded. "I

figured he would be living out in the middle of the desert somewhere."

"Well, you are almost right. He lives alone with a dog on 20 acres out in the middle of nowhere," I replied.

Hank laughed. "Don't get me wrong," he said. "Max was a good kid. Just needed space."

"What can you tell me about the UFO?" I asked. He looked at me suspiciously before answering the question. "You're not from the government are you?"

I laughed at the comment. "No, I'm not from the government. I'm a teacher, a professor at Montana State University. I met Arlan when I moved to Montana. He learned about my interest in UFOs and discovered that I collect stories from indigenous people who have had encounters and suggested I talk with you and Max."

"Can I trust you?" he asked.

"You can trust me," I said. "You have my word, and I never break my word."

"That's how it used to be. Our word was our honor. If you give me your word, that's good enough for me."

"I am collecting stories. Someday I may write a book, but I assure you that your identity will be protected if I do decide to write."

Hank looked at me rather seriously." You have seen UFOs, too, right?"

"Yes," I replied.

He leaned back in his chair, resting his hands on his abundant stomach, and told me a story almost identical to the one I had heard from Arlan and Max.

"We were awakened in the middle of the night with a base alert. I remember dressing quickly and getting my rifle and being ordered to take up a position near the entrance of the base. Arlan and Max were with me."

He paused and took a sip of tea and continued.

"It was a cold night, close to zero, and we were cold. Max kept complaining about the cold. Our squad leader kept coming by and telling us to keep alert and not to talk, and Arlan threatened Max to keep him quiet." He paused and laughed. "It worked for a while, and then Max would start complaining again. When Arlan told him to stand up and stomp his feet to get the circulation going, that's when we saw the craft. It was a huge circular, metallic gray object. It hovered maybe 50 feet inside the base entrance. There was no sound and it made no effort to communicate with us. I believe they didn't need to communicate because we were more of a curiosity than their equal."

I asked him to explain.

"I felt like an insect under a microscope. The scientists don't talk to insects. They just observe their behavior. That's how I felt. That we were insects to them."

"I have heard others say the same thing," I responded.

"Their presence was menacing," he continued. "The craft hovered just inside the base about 20 minutes, when all of a sudden one guy broke rank and ran toward the craft. He almost got underneath it before a bright light—like a beam—hit him. It was almost like he was frozen in place, and when the light retracted he fell to the ground. He wasn't moving. Two medics rushed forth with a stretcher and hauled him off. As I watched them, the craft moved. It shot straight upward. Within a second or two, it was gone, and we all stood there in amazement at what we had seen. We remained on alert for the next several hours. By the time daylight broke, we were all assembled and told that it was a test to determine how we would react psychologically to the unknown. We were told that we had passed and that we were not to speak of the test to anyone. By noon of that day, I received orders that I was being transferred to a base in Alabama. I can't remember where

Max was sent but I believe Arlan was on his way to California. Our entire unit was transferred out, scattered like leaves to the wind. I never saw any of those guys again.

"Is that what Max and Arlan told you?" he asked when he had finished his story.

"Almost the same," I replied. "Max told me that the airman who approached the UFO fired at it. Do you remember whether he fired or not?" I asked.

"I couldn't swear to it in a court of law, but I saw him aim his weapon, but I'm not sure if he fired. It all happened so fast."

"Can you describe the craft you saw?" I asked.

"It was big. The biggest thing I'd ever seen airborne. We didn't have anything that could maneuver the way it could. To see something hover above the ground without making a sound was amazing. It was circular. Maybe 50 feet around and 40 feet high. Maybe bigger. It is difficult to say. It was very smooth like it had been sanded down, but the finish was dull. I often wondered how it traveled through the universe without any damage to the surface. There was no lettering or symbols that I could see. No identification that would indicate its origin."

"Did you ever tell anyone what happened?" I asked.

"The UFO event convinced me that the old ones were right. We are not alone. There are other beings and other universes and we have co-existed with them for eons. It is part of our beliefs, and this only confirmed what I knew from childhood. Still, it was unnerving, I will admit that." He finished his tea, and offered me another cup. "I never told anyone about the UFO because frankly, I feared the military. When I was a young man, Indians didn't have the position in society that many of the young people enjoy today."

"Are you telling me you were afraid to speak out?" I asked.

"Of course I was afraid. The military told us to keep silent under threat of serious repercussions. I didn't know exactly what

that meant, but at the time it sounded ominous. I was an Indian boy. My first time away from home. I didn't know the ways of the world. I was afraid of what they might do to me."

"How do you feel about that now?" I asked.

"I never felt a need to tell anyone. Not even my family. I was afraid they might be endangered if I spoke about it. I just put it aside and lived my life."

"Why are you talking now?" I asked.

"Maybe because it's time. What can they do to me now? I'm an old man. I have a son who is a lawyer. If I get in trouble, he will protect me." He laughed. "Besides, Max and Arlan were my friends. It is only right that I tell the truth."

I stayed on the reservation for the next few days and met several members of Hank's family. He never told them why I was there, and out of respect to him I never told them my purpose either. I was introduced as a friend of an old friend and in Indian country that is good enough for acceptance into a new group.

Several days later I drove to Chinle, Arizona, and checked into the Holiday Inn. I thought about Hank and Max and Arlan. They were all men who had dealt with their experience in different ways, but they shared one other thing in common. They had maintained silence over these 40-odd years because fear of their own government was bigger than any threat from the aliens.

Chapter 9
Alien Abductions of the Not-So-Common Kind

The term alien abduction describes an event in which individuals maintain they have been kidnapped by extraterrestrials and taken on board their spacecraft. Typical claims involve being subjected to forced medical examinations that focus on reproduction. Abductees sometimes report warnings against environmental abuse and the dangers of nuclear weapons. Many abductees describe their experiences as terrifying; others view their experiences as transformative and even pleasurable.

Due to a lack of any substantial physical evidence, most scientists and mental health professionals dismiss these events as false memories, sleep phenomena, or psychopathy.

The first alien abduction claim to be widely publicized was the Betty and Barney Hill abduction in 1961, but records of early alien abductions in the United States actually dates back to a 1897 edition of the Stockton [California] Daily Mail, when Colonel H. G. Shaw claimed he and a friend escaped three tall, slender humanoids with bodies covered with a fine, downy hair who tried to kidnap them.

Dr. Leo Sprinkle, a University of Wyoming psychologist, became interested in the alien abduction phenomenon in the 1960s. For several years, he was the only academic researcher devoting

time to studying abduction accounts. Sprinkle became convinced of the phenomenon's actuality and was the first researcher to suggest a link between abductions and cattle mutilations, which have been reported throughout the west, many on or near Indian reservations.

The 1990s brought greater mainstream attention to the subject. Researcher Budd Hopkins, author Whitley Strieber, and university professors David M. Jacobs and John Edward Mack presented alien abduction as a genuine phenomenon.

Apart from being home to many American Indian tribes, the Southwest has long had a reputation for hosting UFOs visits. In fact, one of the most famous abduction cases, which resulted in a bestselling book and a cult-favorite movie both entitled Fire in the Sky, took place in Arizona. The story of Travis Walton began during a journey home after a day of working in the forest, when he and six other loggers saw a luminous flattened disk. All of the men agreed that Walton, captivated by the sight, left the truck to get a closer look. A blue beam then hit him, throwing him to the ground. He vanished, and when he surfaced he told the story of what happened to him aboard an alien spaceship during the five days he went missing. Lie detector tests cast suspicions upon whether he was truthful or not, but Walton continues to be a favorite speaker on the UFO conference circuit

The individual in this chapter maintained silence about his experiences and did not seek celebrity nor did he search for opportunities to benefit financially from the experience. All he wanted was a normal life.

Willie Joe

A university-educated Navajo in his mid-forties, Willie Joe related one of the most unusual stories I recorded. I met Willie in

the late spring of 1987. I had gone to Phoenix to attend a conference and decided to extend my stay by a few days and visit the Grand Canyon. While driving through the Navajo Reservation, I stopped at several roadside jewelry stands. At one booth, I saw an alien head keychain fashioned from silver with inlaid turquoise eyes. While talking with the owner of the stand, I discovered the artist was his cousin. When I asked him if he believed in Star People, he said that UFOs frequently visited the reservation. Although he admitted to seeing spacecraft several times, he said he had never seen an extraterrestrial. As we continued talking, I explained my personal interest in UFOs and Star People. He listened intently without interrupting me. When I finished, he opened his cooler and offered me a cold drink. After selling several items to a carload of tourists from Ohio, he revealed that his cousin, who made the alien-head keychain, shared my interest in UFOs and aliens. He walked to his pickup, dialed his mobile phone, and began speaking rapidly in Navajo. When he returned, he looked at me and smiled. "Willie Joe says he will meet you at the Holiday Inn restaurant in Chinle for breakfast tomorrow, if you are interested. You can't miss him. He wears the biggest black cowboy hat on the reservation."

"I will be there."

"He'll meet you at 7:00 a. m. He has to be at work by nine."

"I'll be there," I replied. I shook his hand, climbed into the car, and pointed it in the direction of Chinle and the Holiday Inn.

Early the next morning, I met Willie Joe. He was a short, stout, muscular man with laughing eyes and an infectious smile. Just as his cousin predicted, I spotted the black cowboy hat decorated with silver conchos the moment I walked into the restaurant. He wore a massive turquoise bracelet on his right wrist and a large turquoise stone on the bolo tie around his neck. After brief introductions, I sat down and we began to exchange

information about our families, a typical icebreaker among American Indian people. He said he graduated from University of Arizona. His two brothers helped him financially while in college. "I owe them a lot," he said. He had never married, although he had been "tempted a time or two." At the time I met Willie, he was in his mid-forties. Our friendship lasted until his premature death 10 years later.

"My cousin tells me you were interested in a key ring I made," Willie began, after our breakfast arrived.

"Yes. I was interested in your inspiration," I explained. "It was the alien head key ring with turquoise eyes."

"I make jewelry when I have time," Willie said. "My cousin sells it for me. It's more like a hobby than a profession. I have a daytime job. I work in the juvenile justice program."

"Your cousin also tells me that you have seen UFOs. Would you be willing to tell me about your experiences?" I explained to Willie that I was collecting accounts of experiences of American Indian people with Star People and UFOs.

Willie listened quietly and ordered another cup of coffee. When the waitress left, he looked at me and said, "My life has never been my own. From the time I was born, I had a twin, not in the sense of a biological twin, but a twin created by aliens from my blood and nurtured by them on some far distant planet. Every year they came and took me to him. We would play together for a while, and then they would take us into a room, connect us up to machines, and check us out. I always thought they were transferring my knowledge to him. I grew up always knowing they could come at any time. I don't know why they needed a duplicate of me. Maybe everyone has a twin and someday all the human race will be replaced by the doubles."

"Is that what you believe? Do you think the aliens are making a double so they can replace you here on Earth?" I asked.

Willie Joe sat back in his chair, removed his hat, ran his hand through his straight black hair, and looked out the window of the cafe. “When I was a kid, I believed they were capable of just about anything. I was not the only child taken and duplicated. When they would come and take me to their spaceship, I saw others just like me. Over time, there were hundreds, maybe thousands of us taken, from all races. For some reason, I always believed our own government knew about it. Maybe they considered us disposable people.”

He poured cream into his coffee and topped if off with three packets of sugar.

“Was there any particular reason that made you believe the government was cooperating with the aliens?” I asked.

“Perhaps I was just paranoid. After all, I’m Indian and distrust of the government is part of our DNA,” he laughed. “Or, maybe, it’s something I learned during my abductions. Now that I am older and hopefully wiser, I think I was no more than an experiment, but for some reason, I still believe the government knows about it.”

“Why do you think the government would cooperate?” I asked.

“Simple. If the aliens are superior and stronger than humans and our government, it would be only natural for them to cooperate, perhaps out of fear or maybe to gain favors from the aliens.”

“Favors?”

“Maybe advanced technology. I think that’s the reason the government is so vehement in their denials of the existence of aliens. How could you ever admit to the American people that you are allowing aliens to experiment on humans in return for technological advancement? So what you do is throw up a smoke screen. Find a few academics to write books and make the people

who come forth look like idiots. Humiliate them and poke fun at them. That way they keep the truth submerged."

I asked him if his "double" had his personality, and he responded with a twinkle in his eye and a smile and said, "There were some things I kept to myself." When I prodded him for an explanation, he said there were limits to their technology. "For example," he said, "if they did put him [his replica] in my place on earth, I don't think he would understand our culture. He would be an outsider. It would be like a white man reading about Diné [Navajo word for the Navajo people] ways but not having them a part of his soul. These aliens can intercept a man's body. They can copy his body, but they can't take his soul. I think they're without soul. So they may get an identical body in shape, form, voice, but the soul or the spirit can't be duplicated. This duplicate could never be a real Diné."

Over the next several years, I met Willie Joe on several occasions. His story never changed or varied. He was proud that he had never taken to drinking and prided himself on being a role model for the young people in his community. He told me that his nieces and nephews did not like him to baby-sit them when they were young because he was too strict. He confided that he volunteered to baby-sit because he was afraid if someone else looked out for them, they might not know the dangers of the night. His abductors always came under the cloak of darkness when he was a child.

On our last visit, Willie Joe told me that he had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and he thought his sickness, his cancer, was related to his abduction. He said the aliens stopped abducting him a few months earlier. He believed they knew he had cancer. "They are not so omnipotent," he told me. "If they were, they could cure this cancer. Or maybe again, they were finished with me." We spent my last night in Arizona at dinner. I asked him

how he felt about his abductors. “I had hoped before I passed I would understand why they took me and why they made a duplicate of me. I wanted to believe I was more than an experiment.”

After dinner, we walked on the hotel grounds where I was staying. I asked him what had been the greatest impact of the abductions on his life. He looked thoughtfully off into the night sky and for a moment I felt his pain and regretted that I had asked the question. At last, he spoke. “When I was young, I wanted to marry and have lots of kids. I was from a large family and Navajos love big families. I never married because I was always afraid that they would take one of my children and make a reproduction. I did not want to condemn a child to that fate.”

“But you said they never hurt you,” I commented.

“That’s true. But they stole my privacy, my right to live my life without interference. All a man needs in this world is the respect of his friends and relatives. He needs to live his life with dignity. They never treated me with dignity. I only ask one thing of them. I wanted to know what gave them the right to kidnap human children, but they never told me.”

We found a bench and sat down. “I have been thinking lately about dying,” he said. When I started to interrupt him he held up his hand to stop me. “No. I have only a few months left, but if you do write your book, I want you to make sure you tell my story. People need to know that these abductions are much more than curiosity or medical exams. There is a malevolence about them. Parents need to know that, if children tell stories about a twin, or strangers who come into their bedroom at night, listen to them. Chances are they are like me.”

“I will make sure I tell your story,” I replied.

“Perhaps that’s the reason I am here on this Earth, to meet you and tell you my story. That way, when you write your book, my

story will be told and I will have fulfilled the purpose of my life. I do believe each of us has a purpose."

Five months later, Willie passed leaving no descendants. I could not help but wonder about the twin that he spoke about and where and if he still lived on with the memories and knowledge of Willie Joe. Exactly two weeks after his death, a doctor in Scotland introduced Dolly, a cloned sheep to the world. I thought about Willie. He was aware of this technology at least 40 years earlier; I wondered how long it would be before we humans would be cloning children, too.

Chapter 10
Encounters of the Fifth Kind

In UFOlogy, a close encounter is an event in which a person witnesses an unidentified flying object in close proximity. This terminology was coined by J. Allen Hynek, an astronomer and UFO researcher in his 1972 book, The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry. Hynek categorized three types of close encounters: (1) First Kind: sighting one or more UFOs at a distance of 500 feet or less; (2) Second Kind: viewing a UFO while at the same experiencing associated physical effects such as an electrical interference; and (3) Third Kind: observing an animated being, presumably an alien, in or around the UFO.

Since Hynek devised his original classification system, several more types have been suggested, although these are not universally recognized: Fourth Kind: human abduction by an alien; Fifth Kind: voluntary contact between humans and extraterrestrials; Sixth Kind**:** death of a human or animal associated with a UFO sighting; and Seventh Kind**:** the creation of a human/alien hybrid.

While some researchers look upon close encounters of the fifth kind as only telepathic in nature, a broader definition that includes physical interactions between humans and extraterrestrials is used in this chapter. Here you will meet two silversmiths who claim they interacted with star men.

Darren

I heard about Darren in 1999 from a mutual friend on the

Navajo Indian Reservation. All I knew about him was that he was a loner, an avid sports fan, and a celebrated jeweler who had won several awards including best of show at various art events. When I called the cell phone number I had been given, Darren agreed to meet me at the local high school basketball game later that evening.

When I asked how I would recognize him, he replied, "I will find you. I've seen you around." At 7 p.m. I headed for the local high school. As I entered the gym, the home team was warming up as a part of the pre-game activities. The crowd was typical of most hometown basketball audiences: loud and supportive of their local team. As I looked around for someone who might be Darren, a voice whispered from behind me, "I told you I would find you." I turned and looked into the face of a smiling Navajo.

Darren was a thirty-something bachelor. His baseball hat proudly proclaimed that he was a fan of the Chiefs, the name of the local high school team. He directed me to the end of the bleachers and then held out his hand to guide me up the stairs to the top row where we sat down. There were no other fans in the area. "This is my favorite spot. I can yell, cuss, and coach from up here and no one can hear me," he laughed. "Sometimes my friends come up, too, but there's not much chance of that tonight. They will think I have a squeeze." I smiled at the suggestion. A squeeze on the reservation was a slang expression for girlfriend.

"Your auntie told me that you once met an alien," I said.

Darren nodded, but kept his eyes focused on the basketball court. "I am not the first in my family to see the Sky Gods. My grandfather told me that one time a spacecraft landed over in New Mexico and some Indians hid an alien."

I looked at him as we both stood for the Star Spangled Banner.

"When did that happen?" I asked when we sat back down.

"Back in the 40s. It was about the same time as Roswell. You

know about Roswell, don't you?"

"Of course," I replied. "Did you believe your grandfather's story about the alien?"

"My grandfather said that he and some of his friends came upon the alien wandering in the desert. They realized he was one of the Sky Gods and they hid him from the government soldiers. He died though and they buried him."

While I tried to take in what he was telling me, Darren jumped up and cheered as the home team took the ball on the tip-off. "I saw an alien once," he said when he sat down again. "He came to my Grandfather's hogan. When I saw him, I was frightened, but I didn't know he was an alien at the time. He was a stranger. I was afraid of all strangers. So I ran inside and told my grandfather that there was a man outside. My grandfather turned off the burner on his hot plate and walked outside. I couldn't hear, but I'm sure they were talking. Then my Grandfather came inside and told me to come with him. I walked outside and the alien was leaning against the wall and looking at a small metal object. I reached for my granddad's hand, but he told me not to be afraid. He said everything was all right."

"What did he look like?" I asked.

"He was tall. He was dark. Dark skin and dark eyes. I never saw his hair. His clothes were brown and form fitting. He had a strange pair of boots. The pants were stuffed inside. The boots had pointed toes. They were the same color as the suit. I had never seen clothes like that. Gloves covered his hands and there was some kind of a covering over his head like a hood of some sort, but it was really tight like elastic."

"Did he speak to you?" I asked.

"Not one word, but he communicated with my grandfather. We walked off into the canyon with him. My grandfather stopped a few times and checked footprints. He was backtracking. They led

to a large craft on the other side of the ridge."

"Are you telling me the alien was lost?" I asked.

"That's what my grandfather told me. He was part of a small exploring party. They had separated and he had gone up one canyon and the others went in other directions. He had some equipment with him that was supposed to get him back to the craft, but it quit working. He came to our hogan looking for help. My grandfather and I took him back to his craft."

"Did you ever tell anyone what you saw?" I asked.

"My grandfather and I talked about it often. After that, when my grandfather told stories he would begin with 'it happened before the Star Man or after the Star Man.' My grandfather said that when he was a boy there were many stories about Star People, but that this was only the second time he had ever seen one."

When the concessionaire came up the bleachers with popcorn and drinks, Darren motioned for him to join us. He bought two cokes and a bag of popcorn. "When you and your grandfather talked about the Star Man, what did you talk about?" I asked.

"He mostly talked about how they were friendly and meant us no harm. Grandpa called them our ancestors. He said that they had visited Earth from the beginning of time. They come to remind us to keep everything in harmony. He called them seed layers."

"Seed layers?"

"You know. They brought seeds to Earth to see if they would grow and then come back to check on them."

"Did he mean people or plants?" I asked.

"I think it was both. Animals, too."

"What kind of animals?" I asked.

Darren shrugged his shoulders. "He just said they brought animals."

"Did you go near the spacecraft?" I asked.

"I wanted to, but my grandfather warned me away. He said

that I should not touch it."

"What did the craft look like?" I asked.

"It was round. Silver, but dull silver. There were no windows. Only a door and when it closed, you could not see where the door had been."

"When your grandfather led the star man back to the craft, did the other beings see you?"

"Yes. They came out and greeted their friend. I watched as he turned to my grandfather as though he were introducing him. The other Star Men bowed and for a moment they stood there and talked with him, but I could not hear. When they boarded the craft, my grandfather told me we must move to a safe distance. Then we watched as the craft moved upward. It did not even stir up the dust. That was the most amazing thing to me. When the wind blows here there is always dust, but when the craft lifted off the ground, there was no dust. For some reason, I understood that there was nothing normal about this situation. I was afraid of strangers anyway, but these strangers were not like the people I saw in town. They were different. I held my grandfather's hand all the way home. Somehow it felt safer."

"Have you ever seen another spacecraft?" I asked.

"I never saw another craft, but I saw the star man two more times. I was at my grandfather's hogan 10 years later. By that time I was 17. The same alien showed up, or so I thought. He wanted to see my grandfather."

"Did he tell you that?" I asked.

"No. I just knew why he was there."

"I took him out back to the corral. My grandfather was working with a yearling. They greeted each other like old friends. Shortly after that, the Star Man left and I followed him." Darren stopped and cheered for the athlete making a free throw and then continued. "He was walking toward the canyon where my

grandfather and I had led him when I was just a boy. He must have known I was following him. Right before he entered the canyon, he stopped. I knew that I was not to go any further, so I returned to Grandfather's house."

"Did your grandfather tell you anything about the meeting?" I asked.

"He said that the Star Man just stopped by to say hello to an old friend."

"Anything else?" I asked.

"Yes. My grandfather gave him a small bag of turquoise stones. The Star Man was pleased. That was it."

"You said, you saw him twice. Did he return?"

"Five years later. By then I was staying full-time with my grandfather. He was in his late eighties and not well. I worried about him. I set up a little shop in a lean-to and worked there during the summer months. During the winter, I moved inside. My grandfather was no longer making jewelry. His eyesight failed. But he enjoyed having me there and making jewelry at his old table."

Darren stopped and cheered the home team again and offered me some popcorn.

"It was late at night when the Star Man appeared suddenly without warning. He walked over to my grandfather's bed and knelt over him. After a moment or two, he walked out."

"What did your grandfather say about the meeting?" I asked.

"Only that the Star Man came to say they were waiting for him. Three days later, my granddad died at the clinic in town. Just hours before he passed, he told me that they would be coming for him."

I knew it was difficult for Darren to speak of his grandfather's death, so I did not ask him any further questions. In his culture, speaking of the dead, even if it is a close relative, was traditionally prohibited; however younger Navajo appear to be

more open about speaking of the deceased.

Two years after his grandfather's death, I stopped off at Darren's mother's house. Darren was there. Shortly after I arrived, he invited me to go outside to his workshop.

"I go out to Grandfather's place and work in the summers. In the winter, I work here when I am not traveling with art shows."

"I have to ask," I interrupted. "Have you ever seen the Star Man again?"

"No, but I know he still comes here," he replied as he unlocked the work shed. He opened the door and welcomed me inside.

"So this is where you create all those prize-winning pieces of jewelry," I said as I looked over his workspace.

"This is the place," he replied. "I was hoping you would come see me again. I have something for you, but first, I have to tell you what happened."

I sat down in a lawn chair he unfolded.

"Last summer, I spent about a month out at the home place. My sister was getting married and everything was chaotic around here. The first thing I noticed when I arrived at the hogan was a bag in the doorway of the little workshop I had set up for myself years ago. It was my grandfather's pouch."

"Do you mean the pouch your grandfather gave to the Star Man?"

"The same. I opened it and the turquoise stones fell out. They were the ones Grandfather had given the Star Man. For some reason, he returned them. I think it was my grandfather's way of letting me know that everything was okay with him. I have no other explanation." Darren opened the drawer on his table and pulled out a box. "I incorporated the stones in seven necklaces. One for my mother, four for my sisters, one for my fiancée, and one for you. This necklace has power. It will protect you from

harm; you may need it in your search for the truth."

I see Darren every year, sometimes more than once a year. Since I first met him, Darren has married and is the father of three beautiful girls. Although he has aged and continues to garner accolades on the art circuit, he still introduces me to his friends and acquaintances as "his squeeze." He follows the introduction with a tale about how he was once the envy of all the boys on the reservation because he had a date with an Indian lady who was a doctor. I never correct his story because we both know the truth. It was I who had a story to tell; I once had a "date" with a Navajo who walked with a man from the stars.

Chee

During our last visit, my friend Willie Joe (whose story is told in Chapter 9) gave me the name of a friend who wanted to meet me. Chee was a silversmith who made exquisite jewelry that sold in fine jewelry stores throughout the world. On my next trip to the Southwest, I called Chee and introduced myself. We agreed to meet for breakfast at a small out-of-the-way Mexican restaurant on the west end of Albuquerque. When he walked in the restaurant and sat down at the table, I felt like I had known him for years. When I asked him to tell me about his experience with UFOs, he smiled and reached into his pocket and pulled out an object wrapped in red flannel cloth.

"I made this bracelet several years ago to commemorate the event," he said, "but I never put it up for sale." He showed me a bracelet depicting an alien face with red ruby eyes. "Some people say that aliens have large black eyes. My alien's eyes were red," he said. He turned the bracelet over in his palm and explained. "As you can see, the alien head is in the center. It is the focal point of the bracelet. On the right hand side, I carved the moon and the stars that he passed on his voyage to Earth. On the left hand side is

my home where he visited and then the stars and moon again where he returned." He handed the bracelet to me. "This bracelet is for you. I once showed the bracelet to Willie. We talked about it. We decided you should have it."

"I don't know what to say, but thank you. Thank you so much," I replied, surprised by the gift.

"I knew someday I would meet someone who knew about the Star People, so I kept it stored away. Now, I know I was keeping it for you.

"I will never forget this gesture," I said, assuring him that I would treasure this gift.

The waitress suddenly appeared at the table and poured each of us a cup of coffee and took our orders. When she was out of hearing range, Chee began his story.

"I met the star visitor on a hot summer night about six years ago. It was a beautiful night. The stars filled the night sky. There was not a cloud in the sky. I had gone into the desert, as I often do, to spend the night. I like to wake up at dawn and say my prayers. The desert is a sacred place. It helps to clear the mind. I arrived just before dusk, made a campfire, and put on a pot of water for tea."

He took a sip of his coffee and looked cautiously around the dining room.

"Suddenly, out of nowhere, he was there. In the darkness, I mistook him for one of the Yazzie boys who lived nearby. I invited him to sit. When he moved into the light of the campfire, it was then I saw his red eyes and his silver-blue suit. At first, I was surprised. He must have noticed my astonishment because he introduced himself as a star traveler who had come a long way. He explained his mission was to collect specimens of grass, plants, soil, and rocks, but while walking he had become tired. Although there is oxygen on his world, it is much different from ours. It was

probably due to the atmosphere or maybe even the desert. I offered him a cup of tea, but he did not drink fluids like humans. When I asked him about his home, he pointed toward the edge of the Milky Way and said it was in that region but the human eye could not see it."

"How long did the star man stay at your camp?" I asked.

"Fifteen or twenty minutes. Not long. I remember that although the night was quite warm to me, the star man was cold. I wrapped a saddle blanket around him and suggested he sit closer to the fire. When I asked about his family, he told me that he had no family as we think of families."

When I asked Chee if he ever felt frightened or afraid, he told me the Star Man was a gentle creature. "He was a scientist doing a job. He had been to Earth in other locations but his favorite place was the desert. He said his ancestors had visited this area many thousands of years ago when the land was not so lacking of water. On the reservation, there was little chance he would meet humans, and he could conduct his work without interfering with the life forms of Earth. I asked him why he had entered my campsite. He said he could not resist the temptation of talking to a human although it was likely he would be reprimanded should his superiors learn of his infraction."

"Did the star being actually speak to you?" I asked.

Chee shook his head. "I have tried to figure that one out. It was dark, you know. There was only the light from the campfire. I do not know. I remember his eyes. I remember the silver-blue suit that seemed so out of place in our red dirt. I do not remember if he talked the way you and I talk. I only know that I talked to him."

"Did you talk about anything else?"

"I asked him if it were true that alien races abducted human beings. He told me that his kind or race of people did not abduct humans."

“So there must be others out there who are abducting humans,” I said.

“He confirmed that. He told me that there were many civilizations or worlds out there. There are other travelers who conduct experiments, abduct humans, and even steal them.”

“Steal them?”

“As far as I can tell, that is what he meant. They take them away and never return them to Earth. He did not know for what purpose and he appeared reluctant to discuss these issues with me.”

“Was this your first encounter and have you had one since?” I asked.

“It was my first and so far, my last. I have to admit, I am more cautious when I go into the desert. I am more alert. Before meeting the star traveler, I never believed the stories about abductions and missing people. Now I do.”

When I asked if he had ever shared his story with anyone else, he told me that our mutual friend [Willie Joe] knew. “He was my friend. He believed. And now you. There are other people, people I know, who have seen UFOs and even gone onboard spaceships, but I don’t know anyone who would talk to a stranger about these encounters. Most Navajos don’t talk much outside family. We keep things to ourselves. Willie Joe liked you. He was your biggest fan, you know. I am talking to you because of Willie Joe. It was the last thing he asked of me.”

“He was my buddy,” I replied. “Coming to the reservation will never be the same.” Chee put on his sunglasses, and I knew from his demeanor that he missed his friend very much. Suddenly, he pushed back from table and announced, “I promised my granddaughter I would take her to Gallup this afternoon.” He reached out and shook my hand. “I hope you wear that bracelet and you can tell your friends that a crazy Navajo who met a space

man made it for you."

I saw Chee only once after our first encounter. He had a booth at the Santa Fe Indian Market. He was a celebrity in the art world and dozens of art collectors were crowded around for photos and an opportunity to buy a piece of his jewelry. When I caught his eye, he smiled and tipped his hat. We did not need to speak. We had a bond that only the two of us understood.

I hope Chee knows that I wear his bracelet proudly to this day. When friends or strangers ask me how I came by the alien-head bracelet with ruby eyes, I tell them the story about its origin. I always make sure that they know that a "crazy Navajo who met a spaceman" made it.

Chapter 11
Disappearances in the Southwest

The appearance of "supernatural beings" or Sky People among the Diné or Navajo people has occurred periodically throughout modern times. According to Craig Watson in an article published in June 1996, two beings (a tall white figure and a smaller turquoise being) appeared before a blind Navajo woman and her daughter. According to Watson, the being said, "We can no longer distinguish the Navajo from the other people. The Navajo are no longer praying or performing their sacred ceremonies anymore and therefore we cannot help you. Tell everyone to go back to the ancient ways of prayer and worship to avoid disaster. Some will not believe you, but you must tell them." Watson reported that the only physical evidence left by the two beings was small moccasin footprints left by the turquoise being.

The white deity drifted above the ground leaving only dust in his wake. As a consequence of the appearance of these two deities, the entire Navajo Nation declared an hour of prayer and unity on June 20, 1996.

There have been similar occurrences on the Navajo Reservation. In this chapter, a husband and wife tell of disappearing entities that travel to Earth in great ships, and a young man reports disappearing entities in the desert near his home.

Nelson and Loretta

In late March of 2001, I was invited to participate in an on-site visit to a school on the Navajo Indian reservation. I was part of a

group involved in a new federal grant program for drug and alcohol prevention on Indian reservations. During the morning, we visited classes and attended a presentation in the auditorium given by the students. Later, we took part in a traditional Navajo meal prepared for us by women in the community and the school cooks. After the lunch, we were invited to tour the school on our own and visit with teachers and other employees.

After visiting some of the classrooms, I walked back into the main part of the school and stopped at the superintendent's office. He introduced me to Nelson, an elder in the community. Nelson offered to escort me down the hall to the teacher's lounge where I could get a cold soda. As I walked with Nelson, he mentioned his long-held interest in the Cherokee.

"The Navajo use crystals in their ceremonies," Nelson said as he talked about the ancient religions of Indian people. "I have heard that only the Cherokees, the Paiutes, the Mayans and the Navajo use crystals. I think we had some connection in the long ago."

As we talked about the use of crystals in healing ceremonies, I mentioned to Nelson that I had heard about the Sky Gods who had recently appeared on the reservation.

"It made many people worry," he said. "They got in their cars and drove out there. Just to be close to the place where they were seen. Things happen here. I have seen a few things myself."

When I asked him to explain, he signaled that we had arrived at the teacher's lounge. After retrieving a cold drink from the refrigerator, he asked, "Do you have a few minutes to take a ride?" I looked at my watch and nodded. Ten minutes later we parked on the top of a bluff overlooking a valley. "It happened about 14 months ago. I come here to pray, sometimes just to think. I like to watch the sun disappear on the valley floor in the evening. It is a special time of day. It was a warm November evening. I was alone.

After saying my prayers, I started to leave. That's when I saw it. It came in over the mountain in the distance and banked to the left and then landed. It was huge—almost filled the valley floor. I was amazed at how a craft so large could maneuver over those buttes and just set down perfectly. It was the strangest thing I've ever seen. There were so many small lights, it looked like a city."

"What did you do when it landed?" I asked.

"At first, I didn't move. I heard stories of the star beings coming here, but I'd never seen them. Then I got in the pickup and just waited. I wanted to be able to drive away fast if I needed to," he explained. "It was then that a door opened. I sat quietly and watched as two men walked out of the craft. They looked around, but didn't see me. Then I saw them walk toward the mountain straight across from us, and when they got directly in front of the mountain they disappeared. I waited for two hours or more and suddenly they reappeared just as they disappeared."

"What did they do when they reappeared?" I asked.

"They walked toward the craft, stopped and looked around, and then went inside, the door closed, and the craft lifted off and disappeared."

"Do you think there is a hidden entrance in the mountain?" I asked.

"I looked but couldn't find it. I went down there the next day and looked around. It was Sunday so I didn't have to report to work. I took my time. I saw where the craft had landed but when I walked up to the mountain, there was no entrance. I think they have a hidden doorway or they can just walk through rock. I know what I saw."

"Do you know if anyone else has seen a similar event on the reservation?" I asked.

"My brother's boy saw two star beings up near Standing Rock. My brother mentioned it to me a few months back. People

see UFOs all the time. Around here it is normal, but to see those two beings walk toward that mountain and disappear was strange." He paused for a moment. "I come here often. I have not seen them again, but I watch. I bought a camera at the store. I am going to try to get a picture if they come again. The next time you are here, look me up. If I get a picture, I will save it for you."

When I told Nelson I had to return to the group but I would like to continue our conversation, he suggested that we meet for dinner that evening. "I promised my wife I would take her to Chinle. We could meet and have something to eat. I would like you to meet my wife. She has seen some things, too, but she doesn't like to talk about them. Maybe she will change her mind when she meets you."

After agreeing to meet at 5:30, Nelson drove me back to the school just in time to catch the bus that had brought us to the site.

Later, I followed Nelson's directions and pulled into the restaurant parking lot, just as he and his wife were getting out of their car. We entered the restaurant and requested a quiet table. After placing our order, Nelson's wife, Loretta spoke. "Nelson tells me that he took you out to the valley today," she said. I nodded. "That's a favorite place for the UFOs to land. I saw them the first time when I was about eight. I was with my mother and older sister at the time. We were collecting plants for dyes. It was getting dark and we were walking on the road toward home when we saw it land. We were so scared. We didn't know what it was. My sister and I were both crying and my mother told us that we must be quiet. I remember the fear in her voice."

"What did you do?" I asked.

"We ran. All the way home. When we got home, we told our father what we had seen. He went to my Uncle Eugene's house, and the two of them set off to look for it. I was awake when they returned, and I heard my mother tell them to keep their voices

down so my sister and I would not hear."

"But, you did hear, right?"

"I heard. I pretended not to hear, but I heard. They told my mother how they arrived at the spot and saw a machine with thousands of tiny little lights. They saw men outside the machine. The whole area was lighted. They seemed to be checking the craft, and just as the door opened and they thought they were leaving, another figure appeared and walked toward the mountain, just like Nelson saw, and disappeared inside the mountain. They watched them for another 20 minutes or so, until suddenly three men came out of the mountain and they all got in the machine and it took off and was gone just like that," she said, snapping her fingers.

"Are you saying that they have been coming here since you were a child?" I asked.

"Yes. Over 50 years."

"Can you describe the craft?" I asked.

"It was round. Ten times, twenty times as big as our hogan. It had bright red and white lights around the bottom. The strangest red I have ever seen. Darker than blood red. It was a light silver color. There were hundreds of tiny lights, maybe coming from small windows. At a distance the thing looked like a small city. Have you ever come up over a mountain and looked down and saw a small city. That is what the craft looked like. A small city lighted up."

"Did you ever see the figures that were inside?" I asked.

"I only saw them once. I was in my twenties then. I was gathering dyes for the wool. It was in the early afternoon. I did not expect to see them so I was surprised. I thought they only came at night. After they landed, a door opened and three figures walked out."

"How tall were they?" I asked.

"Close to six feet, but I was not near them, I'm only guessing.

They wore light suits, almost white. They held something in their hands. At the time I didn't know what it was. Now I think it was like walky-talkies. My grandson has a pair. Shortly after leaving the craft, they walked toward the mountain. A cloud of dust swept down the valley, but there was no wind. When the dust cleared, they had disappeared."

"Did you see where they went?" I asked.

She shook her head. "I didn't see what happened. I left. I was afraid."

"Have you seen them recently?" I asked.

She looked at her husband. "I thought they were gone. I hadn't seen them and none of my family mentioned seeing them until Nelson went up there about a year ago. When he came home and told me the story, I became frightened. They were gone for 15 years and now they are showing up again."

"Do you think these are the Sky Gods that appeared to the two ladies a few weeks ago?" I asked.

"I'm not sure. Those Sky Gods did not have a spacecraft, or maybe they just did not see it. I think these are different Star People," Loretta said.

Destry

Nelson and Lucille were not the only one on the Navajo Reservation who told me about disappearing Star People. Destry was a young Navajo man in his mid-twenties. I had known his Uncle Cameron for several years as we had served on a few committees addressing violence and gangs on Indian reservations. Cameron told me that his nephew saw a UFO land and that aliens departed the craft and disappeared. When I explained that I was told a similar story by another Navajo, Cameron suggested that we drive over and meet Destry. When we arrived, Destry was stacking wood. His mother invited us to sit and brought tea.

“I don’t like talking about UFOs,” Destry began. “People around here keep quiet about such things. We don’t want a bunch of white people running all over the reservation looking for aliens. They can do that in Sedona. We like to be left alone.”

I assured him that I would never reveal the location of the event, and that I would keep everything he told me confidential. After that, he decided to tell me his story.

“The story I have to tell is not ordinary. I live here with my Mom. When my Dad died three years ago, I dropped out of college and moved home to help her. This is the place where I grew up.”

“Did you see the UFO near here?” I asked.

“West of here,” he said. “I was coming back from Kayenta one evening, and about half way to Many Farms I saw this UFO appear in front of me. It came across the road and moved slowly toward the east until it was out of sight. I was positive that it landed, so out of curiosity, I took a left hand turn onto the dirt road toward the mesa to check it out. About seven miles out, I saw it. It was positioned so that it was well hidden from the main highway. I turned off my lights as I got closer for fear that someone might see me. I got out and walked cautiously toward the craft.”

“Was anyone else on the road?” I asked.

“No.”

“Did you see any activity around the UFO?”

“I saw three beings, they looked like humans. Probably average height. They were walking around the craft as if looking for something. Then all of a sudden, one of them found something and called the others over. That’s when it happened.”

“What happened?”

“They disappeared. It was like the earth opened and swallowed them. I crouched on my stomach in the darkness for nearly three hours. And then, out of nowhere they reappeared and

climbed into the craft. I stayed hidden and didn't move. Then suddenly the craft began to move upwards slowly. It moved toward the mesa and then upward very fast and then it was gone. The next day, I drove out to the site and looked around. I couldn't find anything. No trace of them. No trace of where they had landed. I am positive that I found the right place, but there was no evidence that anything happened there."

"Do you know if there are any caves or wells in that area?" I asked.

"I don't know of any. I don't think they went into a cave. One minute they were all standing there, and the next they are gone. It is as simple as that."

"Did you report it," I asked.

"I told my mother and uncle about it. Uncle Cameron told me that it was better not to talk about it. He said the Sky People had been visiting the reservation for a long time and it was best not to talk about them. He said I should go to a ceremony so I didn't become sick."

After finishing our tea, Destry offered to take me to the site where he had seen the UFO. We arrived at the site about 45 minutes later. We spent another hour walking around, and as Destry reported, there was no evidence of an opening or a doorway or concealed entry into the mesa or the surrounding area.

I stopped to see Destry in July 2011. He was recently married and he invited me to have tea and meet his wife. Although he was still living with his mother, he and his wife were planning to build a new home on the property. Destry told me that he had a job at the local high school and planned to return to college in the summers until he completed his degree. "I want to be a teacher or a counselor," he said.

When I asked him if he had seen any other UFOs, he replied:" Sometimes when I sit outside at night, I see them. You'd have to

be blind or live under a rock not to see them. I don't follow them anymore. I don't want to know what they're doing. I just want to take care of my wife and my Mom."

I think about Destry's comment that people must be blind or else under a rock not to see UFOs. Although I do not believe this to be true factually, I do believe that Americans have stopped looking at the night sky. We are a society that spends little time wondering what is out there. We know what is there—NASA has taken us there. Unfortunately, NASA might not be telling us all that they see.

Chapter 12
They Hover Over Missile Sites

On numerous occasions, UFOs have been reported over nuclear power plants, missile sites, research facilities, and nuclear weapons bunkers at military bases. Many of these reports, made by government scientists and military personnel, has led some to speculate that the intelligences behind UFOs have an interest in nuclear weapons and nuclear power.

In 2010, seven former U.S. Air Force personnel gathered in Washington, D.C. to describe UFO sightings over nuclear weapons facilities. Robert Hastings, a UFO researcher and author who arranged the press conference, has maintained for years that these accounts demonstrate extraterrestrials have been monitoring the world's nuclear weapons. Hastings claims he has identified more than 50 military witnesses who tell of incidents at Malmstrom (Montana), Minot (North Dakota), F.E. Warren (Wyoming), Ellsworth (South Dakota), Vandenberg (California), and Walker (New Mexico) Air Force Bases between 1963 and 1996. The press conference, held at the National Press Club, included six former officers and one ex-enlisted man. Each recalled personal sightings or reports from subordinates and others of UFOs hovering over nuclear missile silos or nuclear weapons storage areas.

The two incidents in this chapter took place at a missile silo in South Dakota. Although the silo has since been dismantled by the military, the stories told by the two Lakota Sioux witnesses confirm reports about apparent extraterrestrial interest in the nuclear proliferation on this planet.

Jake

In 1993, a 28-year-old Lakota truck driver was hauling a load of new pickup trucks to a dealership in Pierre, South Dakota. It was about two o'clock in the morning when he saw flickering lights approaching him on a lonely section of the highway. At first, he thought it was another truck driver who had forgotten to hit his low beams. He flashed his high beams on and off, but when he did so, the object lifted straight up from the ground and then zoomed in his direction.

"It came directly at me. It probably cleared the cab by no more than 10 feet," he declared. "It makes me nervous thinking about it."

I studied Jake as he sat across from me drinking his coffee.

I originally learned about his encounter from his sister. She had come to Montana State University as one of my recruits. "He is my older brother," she said. "He used to be a skeptic when friends would tell him about seeing UFOs at the missile sites. He thought it was just talk. Now he spends his nights outside watching skies expecting them to return. Maybe you could talk with him."

I agreed to meet Jake on his next trip through Bozeman. When I arrived at the truck stop in Belgrade, a small town about eight miles west of the Bozeman city limits, he had already ordered two cups of coffee. He stood when I approached and took my jacket, folded it, and placed it on the booth beside him. He offered me a menu and when I told him I had already eaten lunch, he ordered up two cheeseburgers and fries. He timidly rubbed his shaved head and pulled on a military dog tag suspended from his neck.

"I've enjoyed getting to know your sister," I began. "She is really doing well at MSU."

"Yeah, I'm very proud of her. She's my baby sister. Ever since she was a tiny girl, she talked about being a doctor. I plan to see

that she realizes that dream. It would be nice to have a doctor in the house."

He smiled slightly and I noticed the pride on his face as he spoke, but there was nervousness about him. I asked him about his work as a long distance truck driver and where he had traveled. He related how he had driven from one coast to another, seen both oceans, and had never ceased to be amazed at the beauty of Mother Earth.

"I have seen a lot of things," he said, "but nothing as strange as the night I encountered the UFO."

"When you came upon the spaceship, did you stop your truck?" I asked.

"I pulled off the side of the road to collect my thoughts and calm my nerves, but I did not see the craft again."

"Do you remember anything about the craft? I asked.

He motioned for the waitress to bring more coffee before replying. "It was a huge triangle-shaped craft. I estimate it was twice as long as my truck and several times wider, at least at the widest part. Bright white lights outlined the thing against the sky and the entire countryside around my truck." He stared at the coffee cup as he stirred five teaspoons of sugar in the black brew. "I know one thing for sure. It was not of this earth."

"Why do you say that?"

"Well for one thing, what would a craft like that be doing in the South Dakota skies at two in the morning? And where would it come from?

"Maybe Ellsworth or even Malmstrom," I suggested.

"I don't think so. I spent four years in the military. I think I saw most every aircraft in our arsenal of flying machines. That was not one of ours. I am positive. Besides, why would one of our aircraft hover above a missile site and then zoom away when it was detected. Afterwards, I tried to alert other drivers on my CB,

but there was nothing but static. I had to drive 10 miles down the road before I could even raise anyone. Even then there was a lot of static."

"Did you talk with anyone else who saw the craft?" I asked.

"Not a soul," he replied. He leaned back in the booth and looked out the window. "So tell me, professor, have you met others who have had similar experiences, or am I the only one out there?" He took another drink from his coffee mug and placed it aside as the waitress brought his two cheeseburgers to the table. Without tasting the food, he sprinkled salt over the burgers. "I guess I need for you to tell me that I'm not alone."

"You are not alone," I replied. "And yes, I have met many who have shared similar experiences. I talked with a BIA police officer on your reservation who had a similar experience. He even followed the craft to a missile site. When he tried to radio for backup, his radio didn't work and he was unable to free his handgun from his holster. Another encounter was reported by a man from your reservation. He not only saw the craft but he chased it before it disappeared. Other individuals gave detailed accounts of the Star People they met and their interactions with them, some in positive ways, and others in not so positive ways. Believe me, you are not insane."

"I appreciate knowing that, professor," he replied. "Sometimes you question yourself in situations like this."

After Jake finished his lunch and filled a thermos with coffee, we walked out into the parking lot. He thanked me for meeting with him. We shook hands, and then I watched him walk toward the semi that was parked on the south side of the restaurant. Once, he turned and waved; I did not expect to see him again.

Four months later, his sister walked into my office and told me that Jake wanted to see me again. I agreed to meet him at the same location.

“It happened again,” he declared, as I sat down in the booth opposite him. “It was close to midnight at the same place. This time, when I saw the lights ahead, I knew what to expect. I pulled off the road and began flashing my lights. Immediately, the craft became airborne. This time I jumped outside my truck. I watched it pass overhead. It was like a huge solid boomerang. He traced the outline of a triangle on the table. It had seven lights. One on the front tip, two on each side, and two in the back. They were bright white lights. Within seconds, it was gone. It zigzagged across the sky and disappeared. Afterwards I walked to the missile site; the smell of sulfur was heavy upon the air. The site is fenced so there is no way I could get inside the area, but the craft was definitely hovering over the missile site.”

“I think your guess is as good as anyone’s,” I said. “No one really knows, but apparently there are a lot of people who have reported similar accounts. Some researchers believe that extraterrestrials are monitoring our nuclear weapons.”

“Well, I don’t know about that. I guess these people are smarter than me, but it seemed to me like they hover there to get some kind of power from the nuclear sites. Otherwise, why would they just hang there in the air? Monitoring makes no sense to me. Maybe we will never know the reason.”

The waitress returned Jake’s thermos and he handed her a $10 bill.

“As usual, I have a schedule to keep, but thanks doc for seeing me again. You keep me sane in an insane world.”

I walked outside with him and watched as he headed for the truck parking area. “I’ll keep my eyes on the sky,” he yelled. “If I see anything, I will see you again.”

I never saw Jake again. His sister graduated that spring but he was on the road and never made it to her graduation. Since I have not heard from him, I assume he has had no other encounter.

Louie and Ginger

I met Louie and Ginger at a National Indian Education Conference in 1981. Ginger and I had been selected to serve on a panel related to research about American Indian youth and alcohol abuse. It was not until I had known them for several years that they told me their story.

"It happened back in 1989, as I recall," Louie began. "Ginger and I had stopped for a hamburger at a truck stop on Highway 212. It was about 9 p.m. We had only been back on the road for about 10 minutes when we saw a bright red light up ahead near the highway. Ginger was the first to mention it."

"I asked Louie what he thought it was," Ginger said. "We traveled that road many times, but I never remembered seeing that light before."

"I thought that it might be a new radio tower," Louie said. "I had no explanation. I had never seen a red light in the sky on this road before and I had traveled this road hundreds of times. I grew up here. This was my home."

"As we drove, we became aware that there was something different about the light. It was getting brighter and brighter. Before long, we knew it was not a tower," Ginger added.

"It was a UFO and it was hovering over a missile site located along the side of the road. There wasn't a person who lived in this area that didn't know about the missile silos," Louie said. "The above-ground portion of the place where security personnel were stationed around the clock looked like it was a modest rancher's home. There were no visual clues to the missiles that waited below in case of a nuclear war, but we all watched it being built."

"When we came upon the missile site, we realized what was happening," Ginger commented. "Louie pulled off the road. At this point we are on the opposite side of the highway, no more than 50

feet from the object. It was suspended in mid-air about 30 feet above the missile site. Bright lights covered the entire area. We did not see any military at all."

"Both of us were just amazed," interjected Louie. "We couldn't believe it."

"As we sat there not moving," Ginger continued, "suddenly the craft crossed the road and came directly toward us. We leaned back and watched it pass over us through the sunroof of the car. It was V-shaped. A triangle. There was a red light in the front and six bright white lights. Once it passed overhead, we jumped out of the car and watched it and at some point we decided to follow it."

"I turned around in the middle of the road and followed it," Louie said. "It was strange. It was as though they read our minds, and they waited for us. When we caught up with them, we pulled off the highway and got out again. As soon as we did this, they took off again."

"It was almost like a cat and mouse game," Ginger said. "We would chase them and they would let us catch up with them and then they would take off again."

"Finally they must have gotten tired of the game," Louie said, "because all of a sudden they performed a zigzag motion across the sky and they disappeared. Reluctantly, we turned around and headed back toward the reservation."

"But the story does not end there," Ginger said.

"The next night," said Louie, "after we had finished our work, Ginger suggested that we take a drive to look for the UFO. As strange as it may sound, her suggestion sounded reasonable. So after a light supper, we headed out. We decided to take this gravel road that is out in the middle of nowhere. I had some cousins down that way and we thought we might drop in and say hello."

"The two lane road goes through an area with some small hills. It was in that area that we saw it again," Ginger said.

“Do you mean the UFO?” I asked.

“Yes,” said Ginger. “Again, a craft appeared, but this time, instead of a v-shaped craft, it was circular.”

“It was small, maybe 30 or 40 feet circumference,” said Louie. “It continued the cat and mouse game, hiding behind the hills and then revealing itself to us on the other side. This must have gone on for a few moments, when all of a sudden, we topped the hill and it was setting in the middle of the road waiting for us.”

“Louie slammed on the brakes,” said Ginger, “and we came to a stop only a few feet from it. At this point, I am frightened. I yell to Louie to put the car in reverse and to get out of there, but he does not respond. I hear the door open and a bright light flooded over me. It is obvious they are taking us with them.”

“I was worried about the car,” said Louie. “It was a brand new Mustang sports car. I was worried about someone coming upon it and thinking it was abandoned. These creatures who took us told us not to worry. I remember them saying that the car would be okay. They said they would take care of it.”

“I have no memory after that,” Ginger said. “I remember the white light.”

“I remember being on board the craft,” Louie said. “I remember walking down a long hall and seeing others inside rooms. I think I saw my cousin Ruben, but I could not be sure. They examined me, but didn’t hurt me. All of the time, I am worried about Ginger. They took her into another area, and I was worried about what they might do to her, but they told me not to worry. They would not hurt her.”

“I have no recollection of any of this,” Ginger said.

“After I calmed down,” Louie continued, “they talked to me as their equal. They asked me about my work at Los Alamos. At one time I had worked there. They talked to me about my work at Kirkland Air Force Base where I had also worked. They took me

to a monitor with displays of the universe and pointed out a star in the Pleiades group where they originated. When I asked them if they had ever seen our astronauts in space, they told me that our program was more dangerous than beneficial."

"Did they tell you what they meant by that?" I asked.

"They said that sometimes it is better to be insignificant and anonymous than to announce your presence to the universe. I took that to mean that there were civilizations that might not be friendly toward us."

"Can you describe the craft?" I asked.

"I think we were aboard two different craft," Louie said. "The circular one was a shuttle of some sort that took us to a bigger ship. I remember descending steps and walking down a long, long hallway. It was nondescript, rounded edges. Silver in color. Off the hallway were rooms. There were other people there. That's when I saw my cousin. I am positive he was there."

"Did you ever ask him about it?" I asked.

"Never. For some reason, I think it must have been suggested to me not to talk about the event. In fact, Ginger and I never discussed it, until one day about two years later she was sitting on the couch and suddenly said to me, 'Do you remember the time we saw the UFO when we were on our way to visit your cousin Ruben?' That's when the memories came back almost like a dam was open and all the water flooded in—only in this case, it was memories of that night."

"Are you telling me that the two of you never even spoke of the events of that night?"

"Correct," said Louie. "The next morning we woke up in bed. I looked out the window and the car was parked there. I wondered why I was so tired, but I took a shower and went back to work the next morning. I was here on a consultant job with the tribe. At the end of the day, we drove to Rapid City and caught our flight home.

We never talked about it again until the night that Ginger mentioned it."

"Do you remember why you asked Louie the question about the UFO?" I asked.

"I saw something on TV news broadcast about someone reporting a UFO over the Ellsworth Air Force Base near Rapid City," said Ginger, "and it jarred my memory I guess. That's the reason I asked."

I saw Louie and Ginger last October in Albuquerque, New Mexico. We were all there for the National Indian Education Convention. They asked if I had ever decided to write a book about my UFO research, and I told them I was working on it. We sat for a while and talked again about their experience. "All the missile sites are gone now," Louis said. "I haven't seen a UFO since they were moved. It is quiet in the South Dakota skies now."

Chapter 13
A Vietnam Veteran Reveals a Gift from the Star People

In 1966, an unusual sighting occurred at Nha Trang, an active military base on the coastline of South Vietnam. At about 10 p.m. there was a flash of light and a UFO approached, descended in plain view of numerous soldiers, and hovered a few hundred feet off the ground. The glow from the craft illuminated the entire area. At the same time, the base generator failed causing a blackout. Aircraft engines, bulldozers, and truck engines ceased operating. Suddenly, a UFO ascended vertically and rapidly and disappeared from view. Afterwards, the generator operated as usual and other engines started without fail.

Numerous accounts of UFOs were reported by American military men and officers during the Vietnam War. UFO reports ranged from circular disks and long cylindrical craft to boomerang-shaped objects. Jet interceptors were often scrambled but the UFOs either outmaneuvered them or the pilots were unable to locate them.

In this chapter, a Vietnam veteran tells a story of reoccurring visitations from Star People, who gave him a "power" that allowed him to not only survive a Catholic Boarding School but also a prisoner of war camp in Vietnam.

Russell

I met Russell though June, Russell's ex-wife. She warned me,

“I will introduce you, but he doesn’t have the best communication skills. If he doesn’t talk to you after the first 10 minutes, just get up and walk away.” We were on our way to the annual spring powwow at the University as she gave me this advice. “Don’t get me wrong. Russell is a good guy, but he has a tendency to size you up within 30 seconds and either listen to you or tune you out. I should know. I was married to the guy for two years. I think a lot of his behavior is somehow related to what happened to him in boarding school.”

“What happened to him in boarding school?” I asked.

“If he wants you to know, he will tell you,” she said.

After her warning, I had little hope that meeting Russell was going to result in any outcome but rejection. She told me that he did not talk to many people because he basically trusted no one.

When we walked into the gymnasium, she looked toward the rafters. “I see him,” she said. “He is sitting up in the top row. That is where he always sits.”

When we reached the top of the bleachers, June walked in the second row from the top until Russell looked in our direction. She greeted him, and Russell stood politely and shook her hand. She introduced me and Russell nodded, avoiding eye contact. He wore an olive green jacket of the type one of my uncles wore after he came back from Vietnam. A familiar insignia was sewed onto the shoulder, and his nametag was printed across the top. Numerous washings had only faded it, not erased it.

“Were you in Vietnam?” I asked. He nodded without offering any response. “I had three uncles in Vietnam and one brother.”

“Come here, sister,” he said, motioning for me to sit with him.

June smiled. When I sat down, June told me that she wanted to go find her sister, and Russell and I were left alone in the rafters, with few other people sitting in this section of the gym.

“June told me that you have had numerous experiences with

UFOs," I said cautiously, trying to broach the subject. "I have been collecting stories about American Indians and Star People encounters for several years. I wonder if you would be willing to tell me about your experiences?"

"It's true. I've had several encounters. One when I was in Boarding School and several in 'Nam. But why are you interested?"

"I've been collecting stories for some time now. Perhaps someday I will write a book. I think people should know that American Indians regard Star People differently than other cultures."

"I don't want to talk if I am going to read about myself in a book," Russell said.

"That won't happen," I replied. "If I do someday write a book, I promise, everyone will remain anonymous."

"I'm a private person. June probably told you. I don't deal well with people. If someone came around looking for me or asking questions, I don't know what I might do."

"I promise to protect your privacy. However if you feel that you cannot trust my word, I will accept that too," I replied.

"That's all we have when you get down to it, isn't it?" he asked. "Us Indians, we always relied on a person's word. Our word was our honor. We were not familiar with people whose word could not be trusted. Look where our trust got us."

I stood and extended my hand. "Russell, it was really nice meeting you. I understand why you do not want to talk to me, but thank you for listening."

Russell looked at me and smiled. "Sit," he said. "My distrust of people began with boarding school. Up until that time, I had never been beaten or punished. If I did something wrong, I was told that it was wrong and that I should have done something else. When I went to school, I couldn't speak English and the nuns and

priest punished anyone who would speak their Indian language by isolating them from the group." He looked at me and then at the dancers on the floor. For a while he said nothing, and I wasn't sure if I should leave or wait for him to continue. "If you couldn't speak English, you weren't allowed to mingle with the other kids. You couldn't play with them. You weren't allowed to talk."

"So, did they just leave you alone?"

"Pretty much. It was a lonely existence but I learned to cope. I decided I was never going to speak English as long as I was there. So I spent eight years there and never spoke a word."

"Why would you do that?"

"Because I hated them. It wasn't bad enough that we were hauled off to Boarding School, but we were subjected to a foreign language and foreign lifestyle and expected to acculturate. To do that, you had to submit to them. They tried to break me like a wild stallion. I refused to submit and they never broke my spirit. They underestimated the power of American Indians. My hatred kept me going. I even learned English but I refused to speak it. Finally, after eight years, I returned home and never went back."

"When did you have your first experience?" I asked.

"Do you mean my first encounter with a UFO?" he asked. I nodded and he smiled at me. "It was at the boarding school. I was about seven years old. The priest took me to the chapel. He told me to kneel. He said I had to stay there all day unless I spoke English. When the priest left, I heard him lock the door. I remember how salty my tears tasted and I worried that I would have to pee, when suddenly a light appeared outside the chapel window and a being appeared. At first, I thought it was one of the older boys coming to rescue me. But instead, as I was to learn, it was no older boy but a star traveler. He picked me up, held me close, and we walked right through the wall like it wasn't there. He helped me escape."

“Can you describe the star traveler?” I asked.

“Yes. They were robot-like. More like bugs than men, but I was so happy to be out of that chapel and away from those nuns and priest that I didn’t care. The devil himself could have taken me to hell and I would have been happy.”

“Do you remember anything about your experience with them?” I asked.

“I think these star travelers were watching the school. Maybe my old man was right. They do watch after us. Anyway, they taught me mind control. They helped me learn to live with pain and to survive in isolation.”

“How did they do that?” I asked.

“I don’t know. But after that first incident, I never felt pain again. I could have knelt for 48 hours on that chapel floor and spit in the face of the priest and knelt 48 more. I just felt nothing. When I went to Vietnam and was captured and tortured, I felt no pain. I had learned to dissociate myself from my body and not feel pain.”

“Can you still do that?” I asked.

“Sure. Sometimes it is the only way to cope.”

“You said you saw the star travelers in Vietnam. Can you tell me about that?” I asked.

“I think the Star People understood me. They knew when the stress was becoming too much for me. That’s when they would come. I always went willingly, not because I particularly liked them, but because I could get away from a more uncomfortable situation.”

“You mean, going with the Star People was more comfortable than staying in school or the army or in prison,” I stated.

“Yes, yes, and yes. And if I were with them, I was in control.”

“How could you be in control if they took you?”

“Because they had taught me mind control and I learned to

use it against them. In fact, they found my ability to use mind control quite interesting. Before I cooperated with them, I made them do things for me."

"Such as?"

"We were in a prison camp. Very little food. I made them bring me fruit."

"Fruit? Do you mean, real fruit?"

"Yes. In boarding school they took away my meals a lot. In the prison camp, none of us got enough food, so I would insist that they get fruit for me. Oranges. Apples. Bananas. That's when I learned that I could turn the tables on them. When I was able to suggest that I needed fruit and it appeared."

"How do you know that was not a part of the mind control they were practicing on you? Making you see things that did not exist?"

"Well, I can tell you one thing, I have buddies that I shared a cell with in that prison, who would tell you that they loved those apples, and oranges, and bananas."

"So you had physical evidence of your abilities." I said.

"Whatever you want to call it, Doc, it was real."

"In return for fruit, what did you have to do for them?" I asked.

"Submit to their physical exams. Allow them to collect sperm and whatever samples they needed. They did experiments on my eyes and nose. Exposed my eyes to various liquids, various degrees of light. They do not have eyes like ours or noses. I think they find our eyes curious. They took a lot of blood from me."

"Were you ever in pain?" I asked.

"No. I learned how to control pain."

"Could you teach me how to control pain?" I asked.

"No. They have to teach you. There are panels and they set you inside them. The panels move; one part moves in one

direction, another part moves in another direction. They move faster and faster until you become one with the panels and after that you feel no pain."

"Do you still have emotion?" I asked.

"Can I still love and hate? If that is what you are asking, the answer is yes. I've loved many times. I still hate those Catholic nuns and that priest. I still love waking up in the morning with a beautiful woman. I still cry sometimes. Yeah. I did not lose my emotions. I just learned how to control pain."

"Did they give you the ability to read the minds of others or have some kind of psychic powers?"

"Nah. I can't do any of that stuff. I am just a regular Indian when it comes to my everyday life."

"Explain this to me. If they could come and get you, why didn't they help you escape the prison and return you to the reservation? After all, the military would have just thought you were missing in action."

"I could have chosen that route perhaps. I never explored it. When you're in a prison camp, there is a camaraderie that develops with survival. There is no way I could leave behind my buddies, and there was no way the Star People would have removed all of them to safety. They have some kind of principles about not interfering with lives if it will change the course of history. I don't think that my life would have changed history, but there was one guy I was with that became a politician. Another became a CEO of a big company. So maybe removing them would have made them different people. I just somehow understood that was not an option and was not something I wanted. Just having them come to me was enough of a relief from being a prisoner. They made it manageable."

"Why do you think the Star People abduct humans?" I asked.

"I think they are scientists exploring new worlds. We are just

specimens to them."

"Do you think that these aliens could be our ancient ancestors?"

"Doc, did you ever look at them? They are like mechanical bugs. I don't think they are my ancestors."

"Did you ever see anyone besides the robot-like bug-like creatures?" I asked.

"Never."

"Did you see them as good or evil?"

"I saw them as good when they rescued me, but I saw an evil side, too."

"Could you explain?" I asked.

"I saw them hurt people without teaching them how to control pain. They didn't seem to care."

"So when you were abducted, you saw other abductees?' I asked.

"Many times. But mostly when I was in the military. Several times they would take everyone in our barracks. They even took our guns."

"What did they do with your guns?"

"Just examined them. They never kept them. When they returned us to the barracks, none of the guys had any memory of the event. I always thought that was strange. I mentioned it to one guy once and he asked me if I was trying to pretend insanity to get out of the service. He told me it wouldn't work."

"How many people know of your abductions?"

"June and you. The only reason I ever told her was that one night we were coming home from town and we saw a UFO. She became very frightened and I told her she shouldn't worry about them. I said I have seen them dozens of times, even been on one."

"Is that all you told her?"

"Yes. I never told anyone but you the truth. You are a sister.

With three uncles and a brother in Vietnam, we are related. It seems natural to tell you. If I told someone else, they might commit me to an institution."

"Other people have told me that they feel the same way. You are not alone," I said.

"Doc, do you know how to rabbit dance?" he asked. I knew he was referring to a social dance where couples join hands and step side by side around the dance circle. In more traditional times, it was a woman's choice, and if the man refused it was considered bad luck and he was forced to make restitution. Today, times have changed and the old ways have disappeared and men are just as likely as women to be the suitor.

"Yes, I know how to rabbit dance," I replied.

"Maybe when they have a rabbit dance, you would dance with me." I looked at him somewhat surprised. "But before you answer, let me warn you," he said, "I am known throughout Montana as being quite a lady's man. Once a woman rabbit dances with me, she's mine forever."

"Are you telling me you are a coyote?" I asked referring to the trickster in many Indian cultures who plays tricks on people, steals women's hearts, and make men behave foolishly.

"Only to win the heart of a beautiful woman or to control an alien," he replied.

I have seen Russell several times since our meeting. I never danced with him that night, but just before I left the powwow, I saw Russell rabbit dancing with a lady from a tribe up North. Rumor has it they were married two weeks later.

Chapter 14
An Alien Heart

There is a popular belief, sometimes referred to as the ancient astronaut theory, that aliens walked the Earth in ancient times. Some theorize that ancient aliens are responsible for ancient technological wonders such as Stonehenge, Palenque, Machu Picchu, and the Pyramids of Egypt. Some theorists suggest that the ancient gods were, in fact, aliens.

While some researchers maintain there is quite a bit of evidence to support ancient alien theories, all of it is subject to interpretation and has been discounted by conventional scientists. Supporters of the theory, however, point to ancient geoglyphs, particularly the Nazca lines, as evidence of ancient alien presence on Earth. The Nazca lines of Peru are high up in the desert, and there is no way to view them unless you are in the air; this reinforces the idea that they must have been made by an extraterrestrial race.

Ancient art—as seen in cave drawings, sculpture, and carvings—is another example of ancient alien presence. There are cave drawings of what look like astronauts, aliens, and spacecraft virtually all over the world. Tanzania, France, Mexico, Peru, Kiev, Australia, Tibet, Japan, India, and even Utah in the American West are some of the locations with artwork that depict ancient drawings similar to modern depictions of aliens, spacecraft, and astronauts.

The elder in this chapter believed that aliens not only once walked upon this land but that they continued to do so. To prove his declaration, he displayed an alien artifact of a most personal

nature—a petrified heart, which he maintained belonged to an ancient alien.

Sam

Sam was a respected elder in his community and was well known for his traditional knowledge. He worked in the school as a surrogate grandfather counseling troubled youth, a program that was a part of my ongoing research. One Friday in late May 2005, I stopped by the school and learned that Sam had suffered a mild stroke. Following a short hospital stay, he began recuperating at home. The principal thought he might enjoy a short visit and gave me the directions to his home and a stack of get-well cards from the students.

On my way to his house, I stopped off at the village grocery store and bought a few things. When I arrived at his house, Sam greeted me at the door in a wheelchair.

"How's my boyfriend?" I said when he opened the door. Sam laughed loudly and took my hand. For years, I had greeted him in a similar manner.

"It's good to see my girlfriend. I thought you found another boyfriend," he replied teasingly. "It's been a long time since I've seen you."

"Sorry about that. I was in Alaska for most of the summer. I had a research project up there with some high-risk Athabascan and Yupik children. I came as soon as I heard you had been in the hospital. I brought food to make lunch."

"You better watch out for those Athabascans," Sam warned. "They are known for casting spells on women."

I looked at him trying to determine if he were serious or not. "You haven't changed, Sam, so I know you are getting better," I replied. Sam and I had always enjoyed our teasing banter. I loved him like a grandfather, and he treated me like his granddaughter.

Sam turned his wheelchair and moved in the direction of the kitchen. I looked at him as I poured chicken noodle soup into a pan and added water. He looked older than I remembered. More feeble. I knew he was 92, but I had never seen him in a wheelchair before. His snow white hair was the same, his wide smile the same, but his body looked withered and frail.

"I brought turkey. Would you eat a turkey sandwich? Elsie at the school said you have not been eating much."

Sam didn't answer, and I noticed he was staring out the window as though he were lost in thought. I approached him and looked out the window, too. There was nothing out of the ordinary. Just as I started back to the kitchen, Sam turned the wheelchair in my direction.

"Do you believe in spirits?" he asked.

"Have you ever met an Indian who didn't believe in spirits?

"That's true." He paused for a moment and took a sip of his coffee. "Do you believe in angels?"

"Well, Sam, let's put it this way, I've never met one."

"Do you believe when God created the Universe, that he only put life on Mother Earth?"

"No, Sam. I believe, I know, there is life out there."

"The old ones knew that too," he said.

"Our ancestors knew a lot more about the Universe than anyone has acknowledged," I responded

"I have something I want to show you," Sam said. He pulled back the blanket on his lap and held up a bundle.

"My grandfather gave me this when I was a boy. He was almost 90 years old at the time. I was six or seven." He unwrapped the object and handed it to me.

"It's a petrified heart," I said, somewhat shocked by the object I was holding. "Where did your grandfather get this?"

"From his grandfather when he was a boy," Sam replied.

“How old do you think it might be?”

“Maybe thousands of years,” he replied.

“How do you know? Have you had it tested?” I asked.

“I don’t trust university people, present company excluded,” he said smiling. “They think they know everything. Their minds are closed to the truth.”

I moved Sam to the small kitchen table and set the soup and sandwich in front of him. I stuffed a napkin inside his shirt and then sat opposite him.

“Not many people would believe the truth,” he continued.

“What is the truth, Sam?” I asked.

“This is the heart of a star traveler, “he replied. “If you look closely, you will see that it is not quite like a human heart.” I turned it over in my hands and looked at it. Within the adult heart are two parallel independent systems, each consisting of an atrium and a ventricle. This heart was different. Instead of four chambers as found in the human heart, it had five chambers with three auricles and three ventricles. When I pointed that out to Sam, he nodded. “The Star People have hearts that are slightly different from ours. They beat much slower, too.”

“Well, it certainly looks like a heart and it is definitely petrified. I’m sure it is very old,” I said, as I placed the heart on the table.

“According to my grandfather, the heart belonged to a star traveler. It was given to him by his grandfather who obtained it from his grandfather and so on and so on. Back in the old days, the Star People lived on Earth. They mated with our women and we became one with them.”

“Did your grandfather or his grandfather or his grandfather ever tell you why they left Earth?” I asked.

“They were here until the white man came. They knew the white man was coming to this land. They warned us and suggested

we leave this planet. Many spaceships came to take the people away. Some of the people went back to the stars to live. Many were strong-willed and stubborn and decided to stay behind. They believed they could resist the white men since they knew he was coming. They would have the advantage of surprise. It was not so. The white man's weapons were greater, their words stronger, their numbers bigger. Some of the people even believed them to be gods and chose them over their own people. Our ancestors from the stars never came back to save us. We were left to our own destiny."

"Have you ever seen Star People?" I asked.

"I have traveled throughout the stars. There are many worlds out there. They come and they take me to their world. I do not fear death because I know what is waiting for me out there. Life does not end with death of this body. It is just the beginning." He took a bite of his sandwich and tested the soup. He nodded and smiled at me indicating his approval.

"Have you ever heard of the Star People abducting people or taking them against their will?"

"I have heard," he replied and took another bite of his sandwich.

"I don't understand how on one hand, if they are our relatives, why they would kidnap people and take them against their will?" I asked.

"There are many different groups of Star People, my child," he answered. I waited for him to continue as he finished his soup. "There are many planets out there that have life. Some of them look human, some of them are like human but not quite so, and some are not human at all. There are as many types of Star People as there are worlds that support life. Some are more advanced than us; some worlds have cultures with no advanced knowledge."

"Do you mean, no technology?" I asked.

“Yes. They live like our ancestors lived. They live by hunting, fishing, and gathering wild foods.”

“Have you seen these worlds?”

“Some of them, but only from a distance, much like looking down from the window of a low flying plane, but in this case, it was a flying saucer.”

“You mean a spacecraft, right?

“Yes. I still call them flying saucers. That’s what they called them when I was in the military.”

“What about the ones who abduct people and perform medical tests against their will?” I asked, hoping he would elaborate about the abductors.

The ancestors avoid them. They are no longer humans. They intentionally bred from their race the ability to feel love, compassion, and pain—all emotions. They believed it would make for a better world. One without emotions could lead to greater advancement.”

“In other words, a race of psychopaths,” I responded.

“I’m not sure of the meaning.”

“In the strictest sense, a psychopath does not experience emotion in the normal sense. Psychologists call it ‘emotional impairment.’ They do experience such things as sadistic pleasure, but they really have no conscience.”

“You could be right. Through breeding they have no empathy. They have no conscience. I think that’s what the ancestors were saying.”

“That’s interesting. A world of psychopaths could be very dangerous,” I responded.

“That is probably the reason the ancestors avoid them. But there are others, too, who have a lot of advancement, but they mostly observe. They say there is a law in the Universe of non-interference.”

“Do you know that anthropologists have written that American Indians, as a people, practice the doctrine of non-interference? For them it describes how indigenous people, as a rule, do not interfere in the ways of others, even when they know the consequences of a certain behavior will turn out bad or be unsuccessful. Perhaps we inherited that trait.”

“It makes sense,” Sam said. “Unfortunately there have been some who have broken the law of non-interference. Like every civilization, there are those who break the laws.”

“What do you mean?”

“Some come down and actually talk with Earth people, but it is against the universal law.” Sam yawned.

“I think you need to rest,” I said. “Would you like for me to help you to bed?” I asked.

“No, I just want to sit here in front of the window and watch for the school bus. I like to watch the kids get off the bus.”

“I almost forgot. I have dozens of cards from the children at school. The secretary asked me to bring them to you.” Sam smiled as I placed them on the lamp table next to the window. I returned to the kitchen and peeled two apples and cut them into slices and made another turkey sandwich. I placed them on a plate and wrapped them. I hoped he would eat later.

After two more weeks at home, Sam walked into school one morning. He claimed he was fully recovered; however when the spring came, Sam announced his retirement. I was invited to his retirement party. The entire community turned out. Later that evening, when I drove him to his small senior home located outside the village, he told me he was moving to Denver to live with his niece. “I want to retire while I am still young enough to enjoy retirement. I have a lot of worlds yet to see,” he said with a wink.

I hugged and kissed my dear friend. I knew exactly what he

meant.

Although I rarely got to Denver, I called Sam a couple of times each year. He remained clear-headed and alert until his death at 97. He told me that since he had no grandson, he had taken the star traveler's heart and buried it at the Sand Creek Massacre site.

Sam was returned to his reservation for burial. A photo appeared in the local paper of him in a headdress of eagle feathers and a beaded buckskin shirt. The headline read, "The Last Chief of the Northern Plains dies." I smiled because I knew that Sam was not dead. He had simply joined the Star People.

Chapter 15
They Live Underground

Belief in subterranean worlds has been handed down as myths or legends among generations of people from all over the world. For example, Socrates spoke of huge hollows within the Earth that were inhabited and vast caverns where rivers flowed.

The Cherokee Indians tell that when they first came to the southeastern United States, they found many well-tended gardens but not the people who cared for them. Eventually, they discovered a group of people who lived underground and came out only at night to tend the gardens. They harvested the food and took it underground to their cities. These people were small, had blue skin and large black eyes. The sun rays were too harsh for them so they built their cities underground and only came out at night using the light of the moon. The Cherokee called them the "Moon People."

In the 1940s, the remains of 600 ancient structures were discovered near Point Hope, Alaska. The Ipiutak Ruins are laid out in a city-like grid and show evidence that the prehistoric inhabitants had mathematics and cosmic knowledge comparable to the ancient Maya. This discovery did not surprise the local Inupiat population. They believed the discovery proved the validity of their ancient stories that told of Star People who visited and inhabited the land and built cities both above and below ground. Even today, Alaska Natives tell stories that modern Alaska is the site of many underground cities built by Star People who travel back and forth between the stars and Earth.

In 1995, Phil Schneider, a geologist, structural engineer, and

underground tunneling expert claimed that he participated in the construction of deep underground cities and bases in North America for the U.S. government. His lectures described in detail the cities inhabited by alien races from the stars, the government's secret deal with negative aliens, and high alien technology being employed by the government, including "corbamite" mining on the moon.

In this chapter, three Native Alaskan elders tell of underground cities and a lifetime of experiences with UFOs.

Uncle Beau

"The old ones tell stories about people from the stars who lived underground up near Tanana," Uncle Beau said. I listened to the 84-year-old elder talk about the Star People, as I watched the fish wheel, powered solely by the river current, effectively catch salmon. This fish camp had been Uncle Beau's summer home since he was an infant. "My mother gave birth to me on this river. She was trying to make it to the Catholic Church down river. She never made it. I was born in the boat. My father put ashore here and set up camp. It became our permanent summer home. Each year, when the ice melted and the river flowed, we returned here and lived on the land, caught fish and hunted for the winter. Each year, as long as he lived, he retold the story of my birth on this river. I have the blood of the river in my veins."

"How many Native Alaskans maintain fish camps on the river?" I asked.

"Probably about half of the families, but few use the fish wheel. I'm one of the few old-timers still living," he laughed.

"I can imagine that you must see many things out here at night," I said. "It is so isolated and peaceful."

"You would not believe some of the things I've seen," he replied, as he sat on a tree stump that served as a stool. Uncle Beau

was a small wiry man. His weathered face showed the signs of living in the harsh Alaska climate. He wore flannel-lined denim pants that were rolled up at the bottom to reveal the plaid fabric underneath. His plaid wool shirt fell open at the top revealing long johns. There was no question Uncle Beau was dressed for cold weather even though the temperatures outside hovered near 50.

"Do the Athabascans have any traditional stories about the Star Beings?" I asked.

"There are many stories the old ones told about the Star People who lived among them and went underground near Tanana. The Inupiat believe they came to Earth on a spaceship."

"Have you seen spaceships?" I asked.

"Plenty of times. I was born here in Athabascan territory. I was here before Alaska became a state and my people lived here for thousands of years before any white man ever came here. There were spacecraft visiting Alaska when it was called Aláxsxaq, and they will be visiting long after there is no more Alaska. "

"Where have you seen UFOs?" I asked.

"On the road between Nenana and Denali," he said. "There is a deserted stretch of highway and they land up there. The Air Force knows of their existence. I'm sure of that. Everyone up this way has seen them, but they don't talk about it. The military doesn't like it if you talk about UFOs. A lot of the people from town work at the airbase so we are quiet about it. But privately, we know that they come here."

"Do you know their purpose?" I asked.

"I think they have always been here, just as the old ones said. The government knows about it, but there is little they can do. They were here long before there was a government. I think at this point, the military just tries to contain them and keep it quiet. They don't want us to know about it."

"Have you ever talked with anyone at the base about UFOs?"

I asked.

"One of my niece's boys used to work at the base about 10 years ago. They employed about one hundred civilians at the base. He said that one morning he went to work and the base was closed. They told the workers to go home. When he reported for work the following day, one of his friends who was stationed there told him that a UFO had landed the previous night. He said there was a place up there where the UFOs go underground."

"Has your nephew seen this place?" I asked.

"He said it was guarded night and day. No one was allowed near the site, but he said his friend who has a high security clearance told him about it."

"Does that make sense to you that the military is hiding spacecraft?" I asked.

"I don't think a lot of what they do up there make sense. It is supposed to be a place for training troops how to survive in arctic weather. Why does the military need that kind of training? When are they going to fight a war in the arctic?"

"Maybe Siberia," I said smiling.

He paused and laughed at the suggestion. "I think it is a place where the aliens and the military collaborate and where the aliens can go underground freely without us regular people seeing them. I don't know what they are doing together, but I think that is how they use the place. My nephew's friend said the aliens look like us. So maybe they are the ancestors."

Mary Winston

"We have a story that our ancestors were brought to this land in great metal flying machines by the Star People," Mary said. "The ancestors lived on a cold planet, much like the arctic region. So they brought us here to colonize this planet. At that time ice covered the Earth. It was not like the Earth of today." Mary

Winston was a respected elder and considered a harbinger of the traditions and knowledge of her people. At 87, she was regarded as the only traditional artist still living. While she measured me for a pair of handmade gloves, she told me the ancient stories of her people.

"Where did you grow up?" I asked as she outlined each hand on a sheet of paper.

"I was born in Kozebue and lived there half of my life. My husband died when I was 40, but we were childless. My sister invited me to Fairbanks to speak at a cultural conference and I've been here ever since. Never went back to the village. The second half of my life started here."

"You said the elders taught you that your people were brought to this land by the Star People. Is that correct? "

"Yes. We knew of the Star People from our grandparents. The stories were passed down for thousands of years. We were brought here by the Star People who live at the top of the world."

"What do you mean, at the top of the world?" I asked.

"They live under the North Pole. That is the 'top of the world.' They brought us here to live on the Earth and they live inside it, at the top of the world. Our home planet was becoming overpopulated and they needed a new place for us. So thousands were chosen to live on this new world, but most of them starved. The Earth was different from our home planet. The food was different. We had to learn new ways to build shelter. So my ancestors were like pioneers from another world."

"Have you ever been visited by the ancestors?" I asked.

"I've seen their flying machines, but I've never met them," she replied. "My grandfather talked with them when he was alive. He said they looked like us but that they had bigger eyes because on the home planet everyone lived underground. He said when we were first brought here we had big eyes too, but the sun and snow

made our eyes small slits. The science teacher up at the school told me one time that they call that revolution." I nodded but did not correct her; I knew he had probably told her that the change was evolution.

"Did your grandfather tell you anything about his meetings with the Star people?" I asked.

"That the people at the top of the world are looking for another planet for the people. He said they believe that one day all the snows will melt and there will no longer be the frozen land. It will change our life too much. We will not be able to survive. New people will come and take our land. They will homestead at the encouragement of the government. I hope I do not live to see that day." She paused for a moment and then added, "When I cross over, they will come for me."

"Do you mean the Star People?" I asked.

"Yes. After we are buried, they come and take our body and our spirit home to the stars," she said.

"Do you mean that if I dug up your grave a week after you were buried, I would find nothing but an empty casket? I asked.

"That's what I mean," she replied.

During the years I conducted research in Alaska, I often saw Mary and Uncle Beau. Recently I heard that Mary had passed, just a few days before Uncle Beau celebrated his 90th birthday.

Belle

"Some people call me a medicine woman," Belle said, "but I don't like the title, medicine woman. I'm just an old woman who knows about plants. I use it to help people, but I'm no doctor. I just know what works."

We were walking on a narrow path by the river. Occasionally, she would stop and bend over and pick a leaf or a berry and tell me its use.

“There was a guy who came here once from one of those big drug companies,” she said. “He asked me to show him what Native Alaskans used for burn medicine. I asked him if he had a couple of days. When he said that he didn’t, I told him that he did not need to ask me.” She paused and pointed to a tree. “The sap of that tree is what we use for burns, but you have to prepare it in a certain way. I have some left over from the last batch I made. I will give you some when we get back to the house.”

Belle lived alone in a small remote village in Alaska. There were no more than 40 houses in the small community. “Only old people live here,” she said. “The young ones leave as soon as they’re old enough. We’re too far away from the bars and movies and malls.” Her tone of voice seemed to express both understanding and disappointment. “Our young people aren’t too interested in our ways. You can’t blame them. Their grandparents were forced into boarding schools. Some of their parents, too. Once they left, they were never the same. They lost their language and their heritage in those schools. I always say, they lost their souls. They came back like shells, speaking English and not knowing where they belonged. They started drinking. Nowadays they smoke pot, so they don’t care about nothing. Just their next drink or smoke.”

She stopped again and picked some rose hips and handed the bright red berries to me. “We will make some tea,” she said. I nodded and followed her.

“My kids bought me a satellite TV hookup,” she continued. “I never watched much television before then. Never cared about it. Still don’t. But one night, I was going through the channels and I came upon a show about UFOs. It was somebody named Jennings and he was interviewing people about UFOs. I watched it and laughed out loud. I thought he should come to Alaska. I could show him UFOs, if he was patient enough.”

When I told her Peter Jennings had died of cancer shortly after that show was on television, she stopped and looked very sad. “That is too bad. He should have come to me. I could have helped him,” she replied.

She turned and walked toward a wide field that opened up at the end of the path. She led me to a large rock in the center of the field. She sat down and patted the empty space beside her, inviting me to sit with her.

“This is a sacred place,” she began. “Our ancestors who traveled the Milky Way visit this place. I come here and talk with them sometimes.”

When I asked her if she were talking about relatives and friends who had passed, she nodded thoughtfully. “But they are not the only ones who come. The Star People come, too,” she said. “But they come for a different reason.”

When I asked her to explain, she told me that the Star People come to measure the health of the Mother Earth. “They are our ancestors and they care about us, but some are also scientists. They measure the levels of pollution, they examine the earth and the plants to determine if there are poisons that are changing them.”

“Do you believe they abduct people?” I asked.

Belle laughed. “The ancestors do not kidnap people. Now I am not saying that there are not other races who do such things. I watched those people on that TV show talking about being abducted and the horrible things that were done to them. I don’t believe they lie. I think they tell the truth as they know it. But the Star People I know have no reason to abduct people.”

“Do the Star People always come to this spot?” I asked.

“It’s a sacred spot. They hover here over the field and they land near the tree line.” She pointed toward the trees on the north side. “Please take a walk over there and tell me what you see.”

Belle remained seated as I walked toward the tree line and

there, hidden among the grasses, was a grassless circle. I walked around the circle slowly counting the steps. It took exactly 200 steps to complete the circle. I walked toward the center and felt a strange sensation in my legs that resembled an electric shock. I wandered around the circle for another 20 minutes and then walked back to Belle. When I joined her on the rock, she took my hand again.

"You felt the energy, didn't you?" she asked smiling.

"I felt an electrical shock," I responded.

"That is the energy. This whole place holds the energy of the Star People. It is a healing energy. If you are sick, you will be healed by this energy. It is very powerful. So remember this place, and when I am gone, if you ever get very sick, have someone bring you to this place and you will get well."

I was curious about her statement and told her that I did not want to sound disrespectful, but that if this place could heal, why would she die. Again she patted my hand and smiled at me. I felt as though she must regard me as ignorant or at the least naïve as I asked these questions.

"There is a time for everything," she began. "We do not fear death; we welcome it because we know it is not the end. When our bodies get old and we become a burden to ourselves or our children, it is time to let go. You will learn this as you grow older."

When I told her that my own grandmother had told me the same thing, she smiled and replied, "Then you know what I am talking about."

"What kind of plants do the Star People collect?" I asked.

She walked out into the field and picked a plant. "This is a sample. This plant has the ability to heal blood disease. The Star People are interested in the blood of those of us who use this plant and those who do not use it. They collect information from indigenous people from all over the world and they take samples

and cultivate these plants."

"Do you consider these Star People as doctors?" I asked.

"Remember when I told you that I did not like the title medicine woman. I do not think they would like to be thought about as being doctors. We are just people with knowledge. I have the knowledge. If you want that knowledge I will give it to you. I will give it to anyone. They are the same, I think. They take their knowledge to the beyonds [sic] so that others can benefit. They are not doctors. I am not a medicine woman. I am only an old woman with knowledge."

"Have the Star People ever harmed you?" I asked

"They healed me once, but they never hurt me," she said, almost whispering.

"How did they heal you?" I asked.

"I was chopping wood one day and I hit my foot with the axe. It went all the way through my shoe into my foot. By the time I freed myself from the axe, my shoe was filled with blood. I walked into the house. All my kids were at school. I tied a dishrag around my foot and tried to stop the blood. Suddenly they appeared and they untied the dishcloth, and with their hands they took away the pain and the bleeding. After that, I walked normal and never had any problems. There is still a scar though." She removed her shoe and sock and showed me the six-inch scar that ran from her big toe and ended near her heel.

"The Star People saved me," she added.

When we returned Belle's small two-room house, she made me rose hip tea and gave me some burn salve. She asked me to come visit her anytime, and I continued to see Belle for the next two years until her death. I always took her chocolate, which she said was her one weakness from the white man's world. When I told her that it was actually Indians from South American that gave the world chocolate, she was pleased about that. She obviously felt

that it was not so decadent if she were eating "Indian food."

On one visit, the priest was in the community and joined us for peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, carrots, apples, and diet coke that I had brought to share with Belle. When he left we walked to his SUV. I asked him about his perception of Belle.

"She is an honest, decent person and as sharp as a tack. She might be 93 but she is very alert. I think hard work has kept her alive so long. Maybe the scientists should study her to find a solution to Alzheimer's."

When I asked him what he thought about her stories about UFOs and star beings, he smiled at me and commented that he was so accustomed to hearing the elders talk about the star beings that it did not surprise him when they talked about their experiences. "I truly believe that Native Alaskans have that connection with the stars and the star beings. These elders still give a lot of importance to their word. They speak the truth and they expect you to be truthful. So when they tell me about their experiences, I believe they speak the truth. Belle, for example, has put a lot of faith in you to tell her story the right way. You are an Indian. She has put her faith in you. Tell her story as she spoke it."

This is exactly what I have tried to do.

Chapter 16
Abductions of a Different Kind

The accounts of abductions are one of the most interesting aspects of the Star People/UFO phenomenon. One characteristic of abduction is that it is not often a one-time occurrence. In many cases, a history of abductions dating back to childhood is reported. Multiple abductions, where friends or family members are abducted, have also been recorded. Some cases have even been reported where a relative or friend watches helplessly as a companion is abducted. At some point, abductees usually get flashes or glimpses of an experience they cannot recall. Other times, the abduction is remembered as a dream or nightmare, allowing the person to dismiss the incident.

In this chapter, there are two reports of abduction: one involves a history of abduction, while the second involves a family member who watches helplessly as her cousin is abducted.

Antonio

In June 2005, I was back in the desert country of the southwest. Upon my arrival, I called Aretta, a former student of mine, and asked her to join me for lunch. During our conversation, she told me about Antonio, a cousin who lived in Gallup. She said that Antonio had had several encounters with Star People. "I will call him for you. If he agrees to meet you, I can take you to his house."

We arrived at Antonio's house two hours later. He lived in one of the track houses in an area dominated by Indians who lived off

the reservation. After brief introductions, he suggested we sit in the backyard where there was less noise. We walked around to the covered patio, and Antonio brought a pitcher of ice tea and glasses from the kitchen.

"I have known about the Star People or Sky People since I was a child," Antonio began "When I was about seven years old, my father sent me into town to get supplies. It was my first trip alone. I was proud and excited. Dad had tied money in a handkerchief, lifted me onto our horse, Lucky, and away I went. I was so proud that he gave me the responsibility. All the way to town, I held onto the handkerchief to make sure the money was still there. When I arrived in town, I was so excited. I roamed from place to place, like any child would do. As the day wore on, I realized that I must get on with my business so I went to the vendors and bought supplies and headed home. It was probably a five-mile ride. The night came fast as I hurried along the trail. Suddenly from nowhere, lights appeared. It was so blinding that Lucky spooked and me and the supplies fell to the ground. Quickly, I began picking them up. I could only think of my father and how he had trusted me to run this errand for him. I didn't think to look up nor did I see the two men approaching. I gathered my items and searched the ground for anything I might have dropped and then started walking. Lucky was gone. Suddenly two figures stepped forward and led me away. I can remember my fear as if it were yesterday. I did not want to lose my supplies. My father was poor and I couldn't afford to lose the supplies."

"Where did the figures take you?" I asked.

"They led me to the center of the light, and suddenly I find myself going upwards. I am holding onto the bag. I am afraid I will drop it. The next thing I remember, I am inside a shiny room with no pictures and no flowers. It is a cold place and I cannot understand this because it was so hot outside."

“You describe the room as having no pictures and no flowers. Could you elaborate?” I asked.

“The room was dull like an old coin. It had no pictures on the walls. There were no flowers. My mother had paintings on the walls and flowers in the windows. There were rugs on the floor. There was nothing in this room that made it feel like a place where people lived. I was frightened and I remember crying.”

“Do you remember anything that happened to you after that?” I asked.

“I remember nothing. Later I found myself on the trail headed home, but I was nearly a mile closer to my house. I didn’t know the time. I was clutching my bag in my arms. When I got home my father was angry. He told me that he had trusted me and that I should’ve been home hours before.”

“Did you tell your father what happened to you?” I asked.

“I never told him. He was so angry with me that I feared he might think I was lying so I just apologized, and my mother put me to bed. As I grew older, the visits continued. Most of the time I was taken when I was alone. One time I was with my cousin. He was taken, too, but has no memory of the event. When they took me, I was always angry, but they were too strong for me. It did no good to resist. I would be examined and specimens taken like my fingernails and skin. I never suffered any damage from their examinations. I don’t remember any pain. Sometimes I played with other children. Children who did not speak as I spoke.”

“Do you mean, children who spoke different languages?” I asked.

“Yes. I couldn’t understand them but we played.”

“Have the visits continued?” I asked.

“Yes. Many times since I became a teacher I’ve been taken aboard their crafts. I view them differently now than when I was a boy.”

“In what way?” I asked.

“I see them not as protective, but as evil. They can do with us whatever they want and we can do nothing about it. They interrupt my life, they examine me without my consent, they do things to me that no one else has ever done to me, and I hate it. They treat me like a guinea pig in a cage. It makes me furious.”

“What do your captors look like?” I asked.

“They have huge eyes. They look like big insects. They do not speak but they communicate with their minds. Their skin is pasty like a child’s glue jar, and if you touch it, it feels like sponge rubber. They have skinny legs and arms.”

“Do you ever see other people when you are taken?” I asked.

“Most of the time there are others. But we never get to speak. I think some of those people are not returned like me. I think they stay on that craft and are prisoners.”

“Why do you believe that?” I asked.

“When they pick me up, sometimes I am taken down hallways and I can see in other rooms. Some of those people are fair and blonde like white Americans or people from Europe. They do not look like they are Mexican or Indian like me. After they are finished with me, they let me go, but I think they do not let others go.”

“Why do you believe that?” I asked.

“Well, if the people in those rooms are not Navajo, they must be from someplace else. It seems to me they let some people go but they keep others. I’m glad I’m not one of those. If they have to take me away, at least they let me go.”

“Have you ever told anyone about your experiences besides Aretta?” I asked.

“My family knows. Aretta knows. When you have been abducted, you don’t tell many people. Particularly if you are a teacher. They might think you are mentally unstable. I couldn’t risk

losing my job. I got a family to support."

Antonio' concern was voiced by others I met.

Jennifer

On a trip to Albuquerque in June, I looked for Jennifer. A chance meeting with her father the day before told me where to find her. He asked me if I would talk with her about returning to college. He worried that she was ruining her life by not going to school. Jennifer worked in a gas station/convenience store on the outskirts of the city. She was the daughter of a respected tribal leader. Jennifer frequently attended conferences with her father, and I had met her when she was 8 years old.

"I decided to take off a semester from college," she explained. "My dad said if I wasn't in school, I had to work. This job is all I could find."

"Why did you leave college?" I asked.

"Something happened last fall. I've had a hard time since then believing that school even matters."

I told her that I believed a college education was important for all women. "It gives you independence and choices," I told her. "Besides I can't imagine that your father does not want you to get a degree."

"He does," she commented.

"As I remember, your father doted on you."

"He still does," she laughed.

"Then why have you chosen not to honor his wishes?" I asked.

She shrugged her shoulders and looked at me curiously. "Maybe we could go out and eat if you have time. I'd like to talk to you more about college. I know a Mexican restaurant where no one speaks English, and we can have all the privacy in the world." She wrote down the address and we agreed to meet at 7 p.m.

When I arrived at the restaurant, I immediately spotted Jennifer. She was sitting in a back booth with another young woman.

"This is my cousin, Rosebud," she said, as I joined her at the table. "I hope you don't mind that I invited her."

After we ordered dinner, Jennifer told me that she had originally planned to be an engineer. "I thought the reservation could use a good Indian engineer. Rosebud is studying chemistry, but she is thinking of changing her major. There aren't too many jobs for Indian chemists at home. I told her that she should study medicine."

"Jennifer told me how you thought it was important for women to get an education and I agree. I think it is really important for Indian women," Rosebud said.

"It's important for all women," I said, " but particularly for Indian women. Life has not improved that much for Indian women for the past half-century. An education opens many doors."

"Well maybe you can convince her to go back to school," Rosebud replied.

"I will do what I can," I replied, "but, first, you have to tell me what happened that made you question the importance of an education."

I saw Jennifer look nervously at Rosebud who reached out and held her hand.

"First, I have to tell you," said Jennifer. "One of my cousins on the reservation told me that you know about UFOs and stuff. He said you had seen them and that you were doing some kind of research project about them."

"I've been thinking about writing a book, if I ever get the time," I replied. "I am interested because of my personal experiences. People have learned about my interest and somehow

the word gets around and hundreds of people have told me about their experiences."

"Well, I, actually . . . we have a story to tell. It happened last August, right before we were to go back to school. My cousins and I went camping. Rosebud was along. It was a beautiful fall afternoon. We decided to ride up the canyon, stop off and visit our grandmother, and maybe camp out near her place."

"In her backyard," Rosebud interjected.

"We set up the tent," Jennifer continued, "put the horses out to graze and joined Grandma for some mutton stew."

"She always made mutton stew for us when we came to visit," Rosebud added.

"Who else was with you on your camping trip?" I asked.

"There was the two of us and Jeff and Terrence, our other cousins," Rosebud answered.

"After dinner, we sat and talked with Grandma," Jennifer continued. "She goes to bed early, so about 8 o'clock we decided to take the horses and go for a ride up the canyon."

"We had done it before. We knew the canyon like the back of our hands," Rosebud interjected.

"About a mile up the canyon, that's where we saw it," Jennifer said. "It was a huge circular object with red and white throbbing lights at the bottom that lit the canyon wall. I can't forget the lights. They gave a reddish glow to everything. They turned the canyon walls almost crimson."

"Yeah," added Rosebud. "It was the reddest red I've ever seen. Almost like a bright red burgundy, if you know what I mean. I've never seen that color red before."

"Well, anyway, it was there. A huge spacecraft sitting in the canyon. It almost covered the entire canyon floor," continued Jennifer.

"We just froze in our tracks when we saw it," said Rosebud.

“The horses spooked and balked. We dismounted. We were afraid of being seen. Terrence insisted that we just leave and go back to Grandma’s and forget the whole thing.”

“I couldn’t do that,” Jennifer said. “I was curious and wanted to get closer. As Terrence steered Rosebud closer to the canyon wall, Jeff walked out in full view of the craft. I started to follow him and that’s when it happened. He disappeared. He was gone in an instant.”

“What do you mean he was gone?” I asked.

“They took him. He vanished. One minute he was there, and the next he was gone.”

“Where is Jeff now?” I asked.

“He’s home. He was only missing for a couple of hours. We were afraid to call out for fear that whatever was on that spacecraft would take us too.”

“Does Jeff have any recollection of what happened?” I asked.

“None. He remembers going up the canyon with us. He remembers the spacecraft, he remembers walking toward the craft, but he doesn’t remember what happened during the time he was taken.”

“Is it possible that you just got separated from him?” I asked.

“No, I saw him disappear. He walked toward the spacecraft and I ran after him. I was about 10 or 12 feet behind him when he vanished,” Jennifer said.

“We were terrified,” Rosebud continued. “We didn’t know what to do. We were afraid to leave because of Jeff and we were afraid that we would get abducted too.”

“What did you do?” I asked.

“We hid in the shadows of the canyon wall and waited and watched,” replied Jennifer. “It must have been a couple of hours until we saw Jeff again. He walked out of the bright light like nothing had happened.”

“Within seconds,” said Rosebud, “the spacecraft began to move upward slowly until it cleared the canyon walls. Then it was gone in the night sky.”

“Did you see any figures around the craft?” I asked.

“None. But something or someone took Jeff and kept him for two hours. We saw it. We were there,” replied Jennifer. “After Jeff returned, we rode back to Grandma’s. Jeff had no memory of what had happened. We sat up until almost dawn talking about it. Then we went to bed.”

“The next morning, Jeff refused to talk about it,” Jennifer continued, “but his body was all red like he had sunburn or something. We rode the horses home. Later that evening, Jeff got so sick that he ended up in the clinic. The doctors said it was bad sunburn and kept him there for a few days. When I went to the clinic to see him, he made me swear that I would not tell anyone about what had happened in the canyon the night before. That’s when I knew that Jeff remembered what had happened. I decided at that moment not to go to school. For some reason, it made no sense to go to school.”

“I guess I don’t understand that logic,” I replied.

“Well, if these aliens can come and take you and you can do nothing about it, or if they can brainwash you so you don’t remember, they must have better technology. It just makes no sense to spend all that time going to school. We are all doomed anyway. It’s a waste of time going to school when at least I can live a little.”

“Well, if you call living working at a quick stop gas station, maybe you are right,” I replied. Jennifer looked at me expressionless. “But on the other hand, maybe going to school will be a way to combat any threat in the future.”

“She’s right, Jennifer,” Rosebud interjected. “We need an education so we can face these things intelligently, not emotionally.

Right now you are only using your emotions."

"Okay, you guys. Don't gang up on me," Jennifer responded with a laugh.

"Did you ever tell your father or anyone else about what happened to you guys?" I asked.

"We promised Jeff we would not discuss it," Jennifer replied.

"We never told anyone," interjected Rosebud. "Jeff is our cousin. Our brother. We grew up together. He never wanted anyone to know so we kept his secret."

Over the course of the evening, we talked about a number of options. Since Jennifer professed a loss of interest in engineering, I suggested that she might like to look into astronomy or astrophysics.

"That's a good idea," Rosebud said to Jennifer. "You have the brains for it and maybe you can be the first Indian to travel to another planet. We've already sent an Indian into space. What's his name? That Choctaw guy."

"John Bennett Herrington," I replied.

"Yes, he's the one. A real Indian astronaut. I never thought I'd ever live to see that," she said.

We spent the remainder of the evening exploring theories about why the Star People were coming to Earth. Rosebud strongly believed their mission was peaceful. Jennifer was convinced they were a threat to the human race. It was interesting to listen to them. Both had had the same experience, but from that event they had drawn completely different conclusions. As we parted, Jennifer promised to stay in touch and to think seriously about returning to school.

About six months ago, I saw Jennifer's father at a conference in Washington, D.C. He told me that Jennifer was back in school. I did not ask him if she had changed her major because I had received an email from Jennifer two weeks earlier telling me she

had been admitted to the physics degree program at the university. She planned to minor in astronomy.

Chapter 17
We Are Not of this Earth

There is evidence from a number of independent sources that "human-looking" extraterrestrial visitors have integrated into major populations centers, and that this information is known by a select number of government agencies and military departments. A range of highly classified government documents give credence to this phenomenon, as revealed by a number of whistleblowers.

Sergeant Major Robert Dean, for example, claims that a top secret NATO document he witnessed in 1964 described how senior political and military leaders had been visited by and interacted with "human-looking" extraterrestrials who could easily blend into human society. What really concerned NATO leaders, according to Dean, were that extraterrestrials could be walking in the corridors of key political and military institutions and no one would know the difference.

Aside from whistleblower testimonies, a number of private individuals claim to have encountered extraterrestrials posing as ordinary citizens in major cities around the planet.

In this chapter, two women, who have lived unnoticed among human society, trace their heritage to the stars.

Girty

"You have to meet Girty" my uncle said when I told him about my research with individuals who had experienced encounters with the Star People. I was in Alabama to visit my uncle who had recently moved to Mobile after his retirement from

the Air Force. My uncle, like me, had been raised in an environment where stories of star visitors were the norm, so the fact that he knew of others with similar experiences was not a surprise to me.

"Girty is not an abductee," he said. "She says she is a one-eight black, three-eighths Cherokee, and half alien, and she brags about it. She lives on a houseboat on the Tenn-Tom Waterway."

The next day we visited Girty. She was a tall, slender woman with skin the color of creamed coffee. Her long, thick black wavy hair cascaded down her back and framed her high cheekbones, which hinted at her Indian heritage. Her cat-like gray eyes with yellow flecks gave her an unearthly appearance and reminded me of a Maine Coon cat I rescued from a garbage dump in Ethete, Wyoming.

Following introductions, Girty ushered us into an area of the houseboat that was used for a living room, kitchen, and dining room. She poured us a glass of cherry Kool-Aid and brought out a big chocolate cake. My Uncle ate one large piece, followed by another, before he told her about my interest in star travelers.

"It is not easy growing up knowing you are different," she began. "My father was from a star near Pleiades. My mother could never pronounce the name. They are both dead now. My father died in Michigan, but my mother is buried near here in the Church of God graveyard."

She got up and opened the refrigerator and refilled my glass with ice cubes.

"My parents had a strange relationship. I often wondered how I was ever conceived, but my mother swore on her deathbed that the man she called Joe was my father and that he was indeed an alien from another world. I don't think my mother would have lied to me about that. She was a Christian woman and would have feared going to hell if she had not told me the truth."

She paused and filled our glasses to the top with Kool-Aid and walked back into another room that I suspected was her bedroom. She returned with a black and white photo of a mulatto woman and a white man.

"This was taken on their wedding day. They were married in Detroit. My father's spaceship crashed in Lake Michigan. That is where he met my mother. She was working in an auto factory and she ran onto him in an alley on her way home from work. He was hurt and she felt sorry for him. She took him home and they were married three weeks later."

I returned the photograph to her. It was worn and faded. A crease crossed the face of the man she called her father so it was hard to determine if there were any distinguishing characteristics. His form was human. He was very tall, but from what I could tell, he looked like a white man. "Did your father work in Detroit?" I asked.

"Oh yes. My mother got him on at the plant. In those days it was easy to get a Social Security card. Not like today. You just applied. She told everyone he was deaf and dumb and couldn't speak. In those days no one checked on everybody like they do today. They just needed bodies on the assembly lines. When I was about four, my parents moved outside the city on a little piece of land. They rented a small house and bought a car. My father would sit outside on warm summer nights and watch the sky. I always thought he was hoping his people would come for him, but they never did. I think that is the reason he died. His heart was broken, but my mother said that was not true."

"Did you have a close relationship with your father?" I asked.

"It was different. I knew he cared for me in his own way. He was a cautious father, watching out for me. Alerting me to dangers. Picking me up when I fell, but he didn't talk to me. We had a small garage with the house and he spent almost every moment in the

garage working on electrical things—radios mostly, but he could fix anything. People brought him little appliances and lawn mowers and stuff and he fixed them. I often sat in the garage, played the radios, and rocked my dolly while he worked. He had a five-gallon jar in the garage. People would give him money and he would put it in the jar and hide it away among tires and rags. He indicated to me that the money was for me and it was our secret. When he died, there was nearly $10,000 in that jar. In those days, that was a lot of money. You could buy a nice house for that. ”

“Do you believe he was an alien?” I asked.

“I know he was an alien. He was different than a human being. He slept only a few hours a week. He never learned to speak, although he and my mother seemed to possess some kind of powers that allowed them to communicate. I never saw him eat or drink, but my mother said his stomach was different and that he ate mostly applesauce and minced peaches and baby food. Oh, and bananas. She would mash up bananas for him and heat them with honey and milk until they were a gooey substance.”

She paused and offered me another piece of chocolate cake.

“Do you remember what kind of relationship he had with your mother?” I asked.

“I know they were devoted to each other in a very special way. She looked after him and protected him in public. He was a very gentle soul. I remember one time she tried to teach him to dance and he could not move his feet to the beat of the music. He told her that on his planet people did not dance. He loved going on picnics in the country. He built a picnic table in the backyard so we could eat outside. He copied the design from a photo in a magazine. He could build anything he saw or fix anything.”

“Do you know if he ever tried to contact his people?”

“My mother said that shortly after they were married, there was the report of the crash at Roswell; he became very agitated. He

believed his people had sent a rescue mission. She tried to explain to him that it was not a spacecraft but a weather balloon, but he disagreed vehemently with her. He was sure the craft was from his planet. He wanted to go to New Mexico, but when my mother explained to him that the military had probably removed all evidence of the crash, he reluctantly stayed in Michigan. She said he seemed more accepting of his fate after that."

"Did he ever tell your mother what happened to his spacecraft?"

"It sunk in the lake. Hours later a fisherman pulled him out of the water. I guess the cold water almost killed him. He wandered aimlessly and eventually found his way to Detroit and the alley where my mother found him. He was very weak. She took him to her apartment and gave him a warm place to stay. He never liked the cold. My mother said that on his world, the weather was always warm. I remember he loved flowers and in the springtime when flowers began to bloom, he seemed happier. He liked it when my mother wore a flower in her hair. He picked wildflowers in the summer and took great pleasure presenting them to us. In the winter, he often bought her flowers on his way home from work. My mother said it was because there were lots of flowers on his planet."

"How did he handle the cold weather in Michigan?" I asked.

"The cold weather bothered him, and on winter nights he would huddle close to the gas stove in the house and wrap himself in warm blankets. My mother said that he told her once that if he had to remain on Earth, he was glad that it was with the two of us."

"Did you ever marry?" I asked

"Never. For the longest time I took care of my mother. I didn't want to send her to a nursing home. By the time she passed, my options were limited and I figured I was better off without a man."

Later, on the way home, I asked my Uncle if he in was in love with Girty. He politely avoided my question. When I asked him how old she was, he told me she was ageless.

My Uncle died eight years ago. He was in his seventies. Girty attended the service but did not show up for the military ceremony held at his gravesite. To this day, I am haunted by her appearance. She was still the tall, lithe beauty I remembered from years ago. She had not aged a day. Unfortunately, I did not get a chance to speak with her and none of Uncle's friends seemed to know her or where she lived. I searched in vain for her houseboat over the next year when I returned to Alabama to settle my uncle's affairs. On one trip, I met a man who called himself "Riverboat Sam." He told me he remembered a tall mulatto woman who lived on the river, but that she disappeared in the middle of the night without a word to anyone. He described her as "strange." He said that he did not think she ever slept and sometimes he would see her wrapped in blankets when the temperatures were over 100 on the river. "She was a handsome woman, but she was not interested in men, if you get my drift," he said.

Over time, I have come to believe that the Star People brought Girty and my uncle together. I have found comfort in that idea and believe that someday they will be reunited.

Retha

On one of my annual road trips to Alabama to visit my uncle, he asked me to stop off in the Ozarks on my way back to Montana to deliver a package to a friend he had known in the military. Retha, like him, was an officer in the Air Force and their military careers and friendship had spanned more than 30 years. He spoke of her as loyal friend. "She is the strongest woman I ever met, mentally, physically, and emotionally, not to mention that she is exceptionally bright," he said.

I arrived at Retha's house, a sprawling log home, located on a huge lake and shielded by the Ozarks on all sides around 6 p.m. She was waiting for me in the yard as I pulled up. It had been my intent to drop off the package, find the nearest motel, and crash for the night. Retha would not hear of it. "I have prepared the guest room and I was hoping you would stay. I don't get too much company out here. It gets lonely," she confided. After dinner Retha brought out a bottle of wine and two glasses and suggested that we sit on the screened-in front porch that overlooked a lake.

As I settled in the rocking chair, Retha poured the wine, and sat in the chair next to me. "This is absolutely a piece of heaven on Earth," I said as I looked out over the lake. "How did you ever find such a place?"

"I guess I was just lucky or unlucky. It depends on how you look at it," she laughed. "The owners wanted to sell. A college friend of mine owned the local realty office in town. I needed a place for retirement after leaving the Air Force and the price was right so I bought it."

"You made a good choice," I said.

"Sometimes I think yes, sometimes no. It gets lonely out here. I miss my old friends. I miss your uncle. He was my best friend," she said. I listened to her carefully. There was a sadness in her voice that was more than nostalgia of remembering an old friend. I thought for a moment that she was one of the loneliest persons I had ever met. As I got to know her, I discovered my assessment was accurate.

"Your uncle tells me that you are doing research on Star People," she said, breaking the silence.

"I have been taping and documenting stories for some time now. At first, I thought I would simply collect a few stories, but it is amazing how many people I have met who have a story about the Star People."

“Did your uncle tell you about any of the UFOs we saw in Greenland when we were stationed there together?” she asked.

“No. I asked him once about UFOs, but he gave me some official line, so I dropped it.”

“Well, I don’t care what the official position of the Air Force is, UFOs exist,” Rheta began. “Their technology is so advanced that they make humans look like cave men clawing their way out of the darkness. UFOs regularly visited our base in Greenland. One time, a small craft landed inside the perimeters of the base. A star traveler got out of the craft. A young airman on duty aimed a rifle at the being and all of the weapons on the based were immediately disarmed. Afterwards, the alien returned to his craft and in an instant, disappeared.” She stood and began to pace. “After that, the whole base was on alert for a month. We all knew it would do no good. If they wanted to invade or take us over, we were helpless. Sometimes it was so frustrating being a part of such cover-ups.”

“I suspect there are many stories like that if the truth were known,” I replied. “I have met other military personnel who have told me similar stories.”

“Yes. But that is not the story I want to tell you,” Retha confided. “Your uncle said you had an open mind. I hope that is true.”

“I think I do. Did you share the story you are going to tell me with my uncle?” I asked.

“One night, when we both had too much to drink and no place to go,” Retha said.

“Did he believe you?”

“I don’t think he would have sent you here had he not believed me,” Retha replied.

“He never mentioned that you had a story to tell.”

“He would never have violated a confidence. He would have

wanted me to decide if you should hear my story and I have decided. I only have one request. Let me tell my story without interruptions."

"You got it," I said. I picked up my wine glass and took a sip. I looked out over the lake as my mind became totally absorbed in Retha's story from the first sentence.

"I was not born on this planet," she began. "Everyone thinks I am American Indian. I put that down on all the documents I complete, but the truth is, I was raised by an Indian woman who took me as her grandchild. I was on board a spacecraft that crashed on Earth. Mary Blevins, who was in her 70s, found me. The crash site was near her house. She apparently heard the crash, went to investigate, and she found me. From what I can piece together, she hid my origins from everyone and claimed me as her grandchild."

She paused for a moment and I looked at her closely in the light of the evening. There was something unreal and supernatural about her. Her face, somewhat luminous, had a radiant tone to it. Her eyes, a piercingly sharp shade of gray, were set off by her short-cropped black hair and olive skin. She had a small circular scar below one cheek that she later told me came from falling on a harvested corn stalk in Mary's garden.

"Everyone knew Mary and when she declared that I was her granddaughter, no one ever questioned her even though they knew it wasn't true. She was a commanding presence among her tribe and was so revered for her good medicine, that no one made an issue of my birth. Since she was also a midwife to the locals, it was easy for her to go to the courthouse and request a birth certificate. That is how I became a human being named Retha Blevins."

Retha paused and picked up her wine glass and set it back down without taking a drink.

"I know few details about how I got to this planet, or where I

came from. When I became a young woman, Mary told me about my origins, but she had little other information to tell me. She led me to the site where the spacecraft crashed, but it was a swampy area that was frequently covered with rain and backwater. There was no evidence to prove what she was telling me was true. She claimed that when she found me I was holding onto a female who was still alive. That individual asked Mary to take care of me. I had no reason to believe she was not telling me the truth, in fact, I had always known I was different than the other children in my school. At the time, I just didn't know how different."

She paused and picked up her wine glass again and took a sip.

"When I was a teenager, I dreamed that someday my people would come and rescue me. I use to go outside at night and sit under the stars and wait for them to show up, but they never came. Sometimes I pretended that I had a special purpose on Earth, but if that is true, I have not discovered it. I came to realize that I was stuck here and I had to make the most of it."

"Do you feel you have any characteristics that set you apart from human beings of Earth?" I asked.

"I never fit in with the other kids, but that is a problem a lot of kids have. I was only comfortable with Mary who had a special understanding of the universe."

She paused and refilled her glass of wine.

"I am physically different. I don't have a navel. "She pulled up her blouse and revealed smooth skin where her navel should have been. "I don't require much sleep. Maybe two-to-four hours a day. It has been that way for me since childhood. Grandmother Mary said she would wake in the middle of the night and find me sitting in my bed playing and talking. I just did not need sleep. My heart beats twice as slow as a normal human being, but despite that fact, I was able to pass the military physical. I age slower than

humans. These are small differences, but put together, they do distinguish me physically. I do not cry. I have actually heard people say it is because I am Indian, but that has nothing to do with it. I am not able to cry. I never had the hormonal changes that human teenagers go through. I was never attracted to men or women for that matter. I learned to read by the age of two. I skipped several grades of school. That made me a bigger freak. I was always in school with a group that was older than me and I was too young for everything. So in small subtle ways I am different from you and yet I can pass for human because the differences can be chalked up to weirdness."

She paused and offered me more wine.

"Mary died when I was in college. At first I was at a loss about what to do with my life. She had been my protector, my mentor, my only family. Then, I found the Air Force. It became my family and I stayed there until I retired."

"You appear ageless. I am surprised you retired," I replied.

"All of my old friends were retiring, like your uncle. I only wished I had chosen to move to Alabama instead of Arkansas. At least I would have had a friend who understood me. Your uncle always claimed he was from another planet too."

I laughed at her comment. "He use to say that all the time when he was still at home," I said. "He claimed he wasn't related to the rest of the family, that he had been dropped on Earth from another planet. It was a common joke that he was the alien in the family."

I looked at Retha who was filling her wine glass again. "It is never too late to sell your house and move to Alabama," I said. "I'm sure my uncle would enjoy having you as a neighbor."

Retha did not respond to my suggestion, although I was quite sure she was thinking about such a move when I left for Montana the next day.

When I got home, I called Retha and we had a long chat. For a while we called once a week or so, but my work interfered with regular contact so as time passed our calls were fewer. About a year later, I returned home after a three-week tour of the reservations in the tri-state area; there was a message from my uncle. Retha had been thrown off a horse and was in intensive care in the hospital. After filing the papers for a week's leave, I caught the first plane to Little Rock. I rented a car and headed for the hospital. Retha 's body had become a shell of her former self, but mentally she was more alert and vibrant than the night I spent with her in the Ozarks. She was paralyzed from the waist down and was likely to remain in the hospital for a very long time. My uncle had been back and forth between Alabama and Arkansas. He was making arrangements to airlift her to a military hospital in Alabama when she quietly passed away in her sleep.

Following her death, her lawyer caught up with us at the motel. He advised us that my uncle was the sole heir to her estate, and, as such, he asked that my uncle decide on an epitaph for her tombstone. He was happy to comply.

If you are ever on the highway between Little Rock and Hope, Arkansas, you will pass through a small town that touts 100 fabulous fishing lakes. On the left side of the road as you leave the town, you will see a cemetery. There you will find a tombstone that reads: "Retha Blevins, Granddaughter of Mary Blevins and Daughter of the Stars. She was not of this Earth."

Chapter 18
Where the Buffalo Play

The first recorded case of animal mutilation happened on September 1967, near Alamosa, Colorado, in the San Luis Valley. An Appaloosa named Lady was found dead and mutilated. Both her head and neck were completely stripped of flesh. Investigators reported that the entire area revealed high levels of radiation.

In his book The Mothman Prophecies, John Keel claims to have examined a number of slain dogs, cows, and horses in the Point Pleasant, West Virginia, area in 1966 and 1967. These animals, Keel writes, bore surgical-like incisions in their throats and their carcasses were drained of blood.

UFOs are often linked with these mutilations as they are sometimes seen in the same area where the mutilated animals have been found. Although no one seems to understand the link between the mutilations and UFOs, the fact that several dozen mutilations have occurred is a matter of record.

In this chapter an American Indian male reported that, while on a hunting trip with his cousins, he saw a pregnant buffalo cow dropped from a spacecraft as it ascended into the sky. Upon investigation, the body of the animal had been severely mutilated.

Bill

Bill lived in Idaho, directly across from the Wyoming border. He was a quiet man, not known for attracting attention. He was the single father of three girls. When his wife died in childbirth three years earlier, Bill vowed he would keep his girls together, and

despite offers from relatives, he managed to keep his word. I visited Bill at the suggestion of his older brother, John, who told me that Bill had had an encounter with a UFO. I briefly told him about my research and explained that anything he told me would be kept in the strictest confidence.

"I have one request. I will tell this story only once. Please don't ever ask me to repeat it, and if someone should ever approach me in the future and asked me if I know anything about this event, I will deny it. Agreed?"

"Agreed. I will keep your identity anonymous and never reveal your name. It is a promise."

"The incident occurred on a hunting trip a couple of years back," he began. "I went with my cousins Mark Three Elk and Charlie Blue. You know them." I nodded. "We took our horses up into the Togwotee Mountains high above Jackson Hole and set up camp. We planned to stay for a week or until all three of us bagged an elk."

He paused and opened a can of soda from a cooler under his desk and offered me one.

"We got up early the first morning. We walked to an area known as Lyman Ridge. We separated there. We established a designated rendezvous point where we would meet before we returned to camp for the evening." He paused and drank from the can of Coke. "I was the first to get back to the rendezvous point. By that time the day was almost gone. I waited for about 15 minutes and was becoming concerned that my cousins had not returned. Darkness was closing in fast. Just as I thought I should go look for them, I saw it. The craft came in low over the tree line and descended into the valley below the ridge where I was standing. My first reaction was that my eyes were playing tricks on me. I walked along the ridge cautiously trying to see where the craft had gone. Within a few moments, my cousins arrived. All it

took was one look. I knew they had seen the craft, too. I suggested that instead of returning to camp, that we walk along the ridge until we reached a cliff that overlooked the valley. If we did not locate the craft by that time, we would have no choice but to return to camp. Just as we neared the edge of the ridge, we saw it." He paused for a moment as though reliving the experience.

"Can you describe the craft?" I asked.

"It was circular. Big. It had lights that pulsated at the bottom of the craft. It was an amazing sight. But there were hundreds of lights all over the craft. From a distance it looked like a small city. An unbelievable, beautiful sight."

"How far were you from the craft?" I asked.

"Maybe a hundred feet. We were above it on the ridge. If we had descended, it was no more than a hundred feet, maybe closer."

"Did you see any Star People?" I asked.

"We watched the craft for at least 30 or 40 minutes, but we saw no Star People. I remember we laid down on our stomachs and looked through our riflescopes to get a better view. The scene below was lit up like Broadway from the lights of the craft. It was easy to see." He took another drink of his soda and shook his head. "Charlie said we should shoot it. Mark agreed. The two of them actually talked about it until I told them I wanted no part of it. I felt we did not need to call attention to ourselves. It could be dangerous. We were concealed on the cliff. They did not know they were being watched. If we shot it, they might react. I suggested that we hike back to our campsite, cook some dinner, and go to bed. When I finally got them to agree, I stood and waited for the two of them to join me, and that is when we saw something that if I live a thousand years, I will never forget."

"What happened?" I asked.

As we stood to take one last look at the craft, we saw a buffalo carcass being tossed out of the craft. There are tribes in

Wyoming and Idaho with buffalo herds and then there are the wild buffalo in Yellowstone. Seeing a buffalo is not unusual here, but to see one tossed out of the spacecraft like a stale loaf of bread was not something anyone could expect. Immediately, we fell flat on our stomachs and took up our positions again. We watched through our riflescopes with our fingers on the triggers, but soon the lights began to rotate and the craft rose into the sky. Within seconds it was gone. Just disappeared. By now we are in total darkness. We walked back to camp in silence, skipped dinner, and went to bed."

"I don't want to interrupt, but did I hear you correctly when you said the three of you never spoke a word about what you had seen and that you went back to camp and to bed without another word?"

"That's exactly what happened. The next morning, I got up early, started a fire, and set a pot of water on the grill. I put some bacon in a skillet and waited. It was the longest 30 minutes of my life. I wanted to investigate the scene we had witnessed the night before, but out of respect for my cousins I waited. After breakfast we hiked around the ridge until we came upon the dead buffalo. We were shocked beyond words. The poor animal had been mutilated. It was a pregnant female and her baby had been killed in the womb. Only it's eyes and genitals were missing. The mother buffalo had empty eye sockets. Her ears, tail, and eyes were missing. Her stomach had been cut open, and the placenta holding the baby was missing. We sat there confused. We knew we should report it, but we feared the game officers would arrest us. We were the ones with the buffalo carcass, not the Star People. The word would get out that we were some kind of psychos, and people would talk about us for want of something better to do. We decided to cover it all up and stay quiet, and we have. I only told my brother, John, who agreed we did the best thing by staying

quiet. Charlie and Mark are sworn to secrecy. They will never breathe a word. So now you know and you can see why my secrecy is so important."

"Definitely," I replied. "I would have probably done the same thing."

"It is frustrating. We did nothing wrong, but to try to explain that aliens were involved would just be too much for anyone to believe. We would probably have ended up with jail time and a heavy fine. None of us could afford that. I have my girls to support. I can't lose my job."

"I do understand; I think you were very smart."

"The old timers used to talk about the Star People. Sometimes they came into the sweat lodges or our elders traveled the stars and visited the Star People. When they returned they told us wondrous tales of our ancestors. As a boy, I never understood it. As a man, I grew up to believe that it was true. I was in the sweat lodge when miraculous things would happen because of the Star People. Now, when I close my eyes and see the carcass of the mother buffalo and her calf, I know they are not the helpers, the ancestors. These are a different group of Star People and maybe we should be worried about them."

A knock came at the door again, and Bill got up to answer it. He opened the door wide.

Charlie Blue walked in and greeted us. Charlie was taller than his cousin and about five years younger with a mischievous grin of a 10 year old caught with his hand in a cookie jar.

"I heard you were here," he said, giving me a hug. "But what's going on with you two, locked away in here behind closed doors. I told you cousin, she is my girl."

"We are doing nothing your simple mind can conjure up, cousin," Bill replied, jokingly. "Besides, if she's smart, she'll stay away from you." Bill turned to me and said, "This guy has so

many girls, he chews them up and spits them out like an old wad of tobacco, so watch him."

I smiled at both of them. I recognized the familiar banter between cousins. They liked to tease each other about women, but if any woman had ever shown an interest in either of them, he would have pulled a disappearing act that would have put Houdini to shame.

"Nah. I'm just joking cousin. We were just talking about UFOs," Bill said. Charlie looked at Bill with a surprised expression on his face. "I was telling her that I know for certain that UFOs exist because you saw one last year out on Hawkins Road, and I said, if my cousin said he saw a UFO, then there are UFOs."

Charlie relaxed and smiled. I looked at Bill and he gave me a wink when Charlie wasn't looking.

"I wonder if you would be able to tell me about it?" I asked.

"I heard you were collecting stories about UFOs," Charlie said. "There isn't much to tell. I was traveling on Hawkins last fall. Have you ever been on that road?" I nodded. "So you know how winding and narrow it can be?" I nodded again. "It was right at the crossroads where the road divides and you take the road to the left to Las Vegas." I nodded remembering the homemade Las Vegas sign and wondering what it was doing in the middle of nowhere.

"The craft was setting in the field off to the left of the highway," Charlie continued. "When I came upon it, it took me several seconds to realize what I was seeing. It was probably 50 feet in diameter. A dull color, maybe dark gray or black. Bright red lights would fade to dim and then brighten again. I pulled to the side of the road and watched. It probably remained there for about five minutes, and then it started to rise and hover over the field. Then it soared upward and was gone. I checked in at the police station before going home. There had been three separate reports of the UFO spotted at different locations on the reservation that

night. I know what I saw. It was definitely a saucer-shaped craft."

"Have you ever seen anything similar to this craft before?" I asked.

"I'm ex-military," Charlie said. "I worked intelligence in Iraq. I know the U.S. government doesn't have anything capable of that kind of flight. This thing could hover in the air dead still and then disappear within seconds. I don't know where they come from, but they aren't from here. I'm convinced they're alien in origin. Nobody, and I mean nobody, will ever tell me otherwise."

"So that's the story about UFOs," Bill said.

I took his cue and understood that his story was over.

I see Bill a couple of times a year. We have never talked about UFOs since that day. I made a promise. I plan to keep it.

Chapter 19
They Are Shapeshifters

In American Indian cultures, a creature that can transform from one thing to another, generally human to animal, is referred to as a shapeshifter, shape changer, or skinwalker. Unlike other cultures that feature monsters and supernatural entities of evil such as vampires or werewolves, not all shapeshifters are considered evil within American Indian cultures. For example, medicine men may take the shape of another to induce healing powers in some Indian cultures. Hunters may assume the identity of an animal to effectively use the animal's prowess in the pursuit of its prey.

In this chapter, an elder and a young veterinary student encounter UFOs that change shapes. They referred to this behavior as shape shifting, since within their indigenous cultures, it was the best description for what occurred.

Grandma Redbird

I visited Grandma Redbird at the invitation of her daughter who told me that her mother had been visited by Star People most of her life. Until recently, she had considered them to be the ancestors; however, recently some of the star visitors made her question their origin. I arrived at her two-room log cabin in the late afternoon.

"They have been coming here since I was a child," Grandma Redbird said. "It was such a regular event that I expected them. They usually came after midnight. In the summers, I used to stay up late and watch the skies. I'd stay there until my mother made

me come in the house. Even then, I sneaked out because I didn't want to miss them."

"Have they been coming to you all of your life?" I asked.

"I never remember a year when they didn't come at least once. Most years they came three or four times. Even now at 100, they still come to me. When it is my time, they will come for me and take me away to the stars."

"So you never feared the space travelers, correct?"

"Not until a couple of weeks ago. I was in the kitchen when I saw several bright round objects approaching from the east. I called Pearl, but she did not hear me. She sleeps like the dead." Grandma Redbird was referring to her 74-year-old daughter who lived with her. "So I turned off the lights and watched. One by one each object fell from the night sky. I thought they were going to crash."

She got up from her rocking chair and walked to the door. "Come," she said. I got up and followed her outside onto the small stoop.

"Could it have been a meteor?" I asked.

"There were six distant objects," she replied.

"Could you make out any form or were they just bright round objects?" I asked.

"When they came from the east, they were like round balls of bright light, but by the time I got outside, they were there."

I looked in the direction she was pointing. "On the river?" I asked.

"Over the river," she replied. "There were six of them. Small ships. Maybe 20 or 30 feet in diameter. They just hovered there like they were hanging from invisible threads in the sky."

"What did you do?"

"I walked toward them. As I approached within 100 yards or so, they moved upward and flew away. I turned and started back

toward the house. A fierce wind came up and I stopped and looked back toward the east, and that is when I saw it. Another ship suddenly appeared and set down in the field."

"Do you mean, right here in front of your house?"

"Yes, but something strange happened. Instead of the small circular ships I saw, there was now a ship 10 times that size. I watched it for about 30 minutes. There were lights that thumped from white to orange." She opened and closed her hand simulating the motion of pulsating lights. "It was the first time I realized, these were not the ancestors. These Star People were different. I had never been afraid of the Star People, but this time, I felt my heart beat faster and my palms sweat. I was frightened. I opened the door and went inside and locked it. I sat in the rocking chair and waited. I wanted to walk down the hall and wake Pearl, but I knew she would be scared stiff and I decided it was best to wait and see what happened. I saw the lights changing from brighter to dimmer through the windows. I felt myself growing tired. I got up and went into the kitchen and made a pot of coffee. I did not want to sleep."

"Did you fall asleep?" I asked.

"Let's go back inside," she replied as she turned and opened the door. We walked back in the house and sat at the kitchen table. Pearl filled her mother's coffee cup again and Grandma Redbird poured four tablespoons of sugar into the dark brew and topped it off with a powdery cream.

"I went aboard their craft. I have no recollection of being forced to go and yet I have no memory of how I got there. I was checked out by someone that I think was a doctor. He kept asking me how old I was in Earth years. I didn't understand Earth years. I only knew years. He wanted to know why I lived so long. I told him I had no control over that. The questions made no sense to me."

“Can you describe the doctor?” I asked.

“He was a strange looking fellow. He wore a black glittery suit that was tight against his skin. It came all the way down to his hands. His hands were large with long fingers. Twice as long as mine.” She turned her hands over and looked at them. “They were skinny long fingers. His head was big, bigger than a normal person. It looked like he had padded shoulders. His shoulders were broad for his shape. His legs were long and skinny and looked funny inside his tight black glittery pants. “

“What about his face?” I asked.

“That’s another thing. I can’t describe his face. All I saw was my reflection in his face.”

“Your reflection?”

“Yes. Almost like I was looking at myself in a store window. Do you know what I mean?”

“Yes. I do. It’s a reflection on glass, right?”

“Right.”

“Did this being examine you?”

“Not that I remember. He was just interested in my age. He cut a piece of my hair.” She pulled on a strand of hair that was not long enough to be a part of her bun. “I never cut my hair. I don’t know what he was going to do with my hair.”

“Can you remember anything about the spacecraft?” I asked.

“It had four windows. I thought it was round, but it wasn’t. It was like an oval inside. There were machines inside that I did not recognize.”

“Machines?”

“I don’t know what they were. They blinked lights and some made noises. I called them machines,” Grandma Redbird said, almost sounding frustrated by the fact that she could not adequately describe what she had seen.

“Did you see any other Star People on the craft?” I asked.

“No one. Just the doctor. But I think there were others. I saw four chairs. They must have been for someone. I asked him where he was from, and he said from a place unknown to people of Earth.”

“Do you remember anything else?” I asked.

“There was nothing else. The next morning, I woke up in the rocking chair. I had been there all night. Pearl did not wake up until late that morning and she found me sitting there.”

Pearl looked at her mother, frowned, and then commented, “I have never known my mother to fall asleep in her rocking chair. I was scared.”

“She thought I was dead,” Grandma Redbird said laughing.

“I did not. You’ll outlive me, Mom,” Pearl replied. Grandma Redbird remained silent for a moment and then motioned for Pearl to fill her coffee cup again.

“I think they put me under a spell and took me on their spaceship. That’s what I think. I think they didn’t believe I would remember what they did, but these Star People, they underestimate the Indian spirit. We are a strong people.”

“Do you think they didn’t want you to remember?”

“Oh yes. I think they thought they could put me under their spell and I would forget everything. But I remembered. All those questions about age. I wonder if they think humans are stupid. I would guess they don’t live so long on their earth. Maybe they die early and they’re looking for a cure. Maybe they suffer from short life instead of cancer and heart attacks. So they’re taking people like me who are old and trying to find out why we are blessed with so many years. I think if we could follow them home, we would not find any 100 year olds on their earth.”

“Do you think you learned anything from this experience?” I asked.

“I learned they are not a friendly or trusting people. If they

were, they would ask for our help directly instead of sneaking around like a fox in a hen house. I think they might be a race that is dying because they are interested in this old woman and why she lives so long. I worry they might come back and that scares me. “

“Can you tell me why you are afraid of this group?”

“It is obvious, isn’t it? They are smarter than us if they can travel here. If they can cast a spell on humans, then they can do things to us against our will or without our knowledge. All of these things should scare us and make us prepare for their return. They could come here and take Pearl and me, and no one would ever know until it was too late. Do you think when the police found out that they would solve our disappearance? We would just be another unsolved mystery on their books. No answers.”

“I can see why you are fearful. Do you think you might like to move to town or find some other place to live?” I asked.

“My other daughter, Mary, has asked us to come live with her. She is alone now that her husband died. She’s over in Minneapolis. She has a house with running water and a bathroom. It would be nice to have an indoor bathroom. We might just take her up on that.”

Grandma Redbird passed away in her sleep two days before her 101st birthday, which was exactly a week after my interview. Her daughter Pearl moved to Minnesota and lived with her sister, Mary. Last year, I had a stopover in Minneapolis on my way to Washington, D.C. I called Mary and was surprised when Pearl answered. She told me that the night of her mother’s passing a spaceship came, circled the house, and hovered there silently before disappearing in the night sky. When she went into her mother’s room later that night, she discovered her mother had passed. The official report said she died of a massive heart attack, but Pearl believed the star ancestors had come to take her mother home, but there was no way of proving it.

According to Pearl, her passing was a blessing. She had refused to sleep the last week before her death and had become more erratic in her behavior. She was concerned the shape shifting Star People would return. “At least she no longer has to worry about being taken away by them,” she said.

Sometimes when I look at the stars and wonder about the different worlds in the distance, I think about Grandma Redbird. She was a gentle soul who lived her life believing in one race of Star People, and when she encountered another group, she was unable to deal with the difference. Perhaps her experience helps explain the different types of Star People described by other abductees. In any case, I listened to her story; I saw her anxiety, and I believed.

Jesse

“UFOs have always frequented this area,” Jessie told me. “I’ve seen them since I was a kid. But the UFOs I’ve seen lately are different.”

“I talked to your dad at the tribal offices a couple of days ago, and he said you had a unusual experience with a UFO,” I said.

“A UFO and its inhabitants,” she replied.

“Can you tell me about it?” I asked.

“I think they are more sophisticated, if that is possible,” Jessie responded. “Lately, they appear, disappear, reappear as something else. It is strange. I think they’re becoming more sophisticated. They can shape shift into something else before your eyes. It makes you wonder if your eyes are playing tricks on you.”

“Can you explain?” I asked, as Jessie filled the feed bin for the horses. She was a tall, thin teenager, not yet a woman, but no longer a girl. She looked like she belonged on the cover of a teen magazine rather than a horse ranch on an Indian reservation in North Dakota. Her long black hair fell in a single French braid

down her back. A rawhide necklace with a bear claw hung around her neck, a trophy from a bear that she had killed when she was 13. She was enrolled as a freshman at the tribal college, but planned to transfer to the University of Wyoming in the fall to study veterinary science. After she had mixed some molasses with the feed and brought the horses in from the corral to eat, she suggested we go into town for coffee.

"Just leave your car here. I want to take you on a side road to town. I have something to show you."

I returned to my car, retrieved my purse, and joined Jessie in her pickup.

"Back when I was a girl," she began, "we would see UFOs, my folks and me. They were circular in shape, just the kind you hear about in the news or in sci-fi movies. They sometimes would stop and hover over water holes on the farm and then they would be gone in an instant. It was such a regular occurrence that it never occurred to me that UFOs were not seen by everyone. I just thought they were a part of the landscape, I guess. Just ordinary. "

"How often did you see them?" I asked.

"Maybe two or three times a month. I never kept count, but I know that it was a regular event."

"What did your dad tell you about the UFOs?" I asked.

"He said not to be afraid. They were the ancestors. He said that is what his dad had said and his grandfather. Our people believe strongly that the ancestors visit us. You know that." I nodded in agreement. "There was no reason to be afraid anyway. They never tried to harm us. Sometimes I felt like they came here to rest. In the olden days, my great grandfather said that they left messages for the people, and even though they no longer leave messages, they still come."

As we topped a hill on the four-wheel drive rutted road, Jessie stopped and pointed to the valley below. "During my senior year in

high school five of my closest friends and I came up here for a graduation party weekend. We planned to hang out and celebrate our last weekend together before we graduated. We had all grown up together; some were planning to leave the reservation for work or college. It was our graduation party without boys."

"Is this where the event happened your father mentioned?" I asked.

"No. But this was the first time I saw the shape shifters."

I knew she was talking about an entity that was able to shift from one shape to another.

"Can you tell me more about that?" I asked.

"That night, we set up our tents and built a fire. We cooked hamburgers and roasted marshmallows. We spent time just relaxing and talking about all the things we had shared over the years. About midnight, we saw seven craft come in over the hills there. They were doing maneuvers in the valley below. It was like we were above them watching everything."

"What were you thinking as you saw them?

"That they were not the same as the UFOs I had always seen."

"Can you explain?"

"I always saw a single craft come in and hover over the water or set down on the water's edge. I had never seen seven at a time, and not only that, sometimes as they flew they would turn into balls of light before our eyes and then they would merge. After that we saw a huge craft that was a completely different form, like a big triangle, zooming upward in the sky. Within seconds it was gone. "

"What did your friends think?" I asked.

"We were all a little edgy. Two of the girls said they were going home. They were afraid. The rest of us stayed. We had all seen UFOs before. It took more than that to scare us," Jessie said laughing.

“Did you see anything else that night?” I asked.

“Nothing. Nor did we see anything the next night either. The sky was completely absent of any activity. When we got back to school the next Monday, everyone was talking about the UFOs, but it wasn’t long until it was all forgotten. “

“When was the next time you encountered a similar event?” I asked.

“I remember it clearly. It was the week before the fourth of July,” Jessie said, as she started the pickup and we headed east toward town. “I was alone at the ranch. Dad was at the council office meeting with some people about fireworks, and Mom had gone to a teacher-training weekend for recertification in Minot. It was about dusk that I saw seven balls of light approach the ranch. I sat down on the edge of the deck and watched. I remember holding the keys to the truck in my hand in case something bad happened and I had to make a run for it.”

“Why did you think something bad might happen?” I asked.

“I just had a strange feeling in the pit of my stomach. Maybe intuition. Anyway, I sat there watching as those seven balls of light kept getting closer and closer. Then, all of a sudden, one light veered off from the rest and came toward the house. It stopped short of the house maybe 30 feet away. It just hovered there a few feet from the ground.”

“Where were the others?” I asked.

“At this point, I was only focusing on the one that was so close to me and wondered if I could make it to my pickup. I really didn’t know where the others were. As I edged toward the pickup, the ball of light transformed again and a human form materialized in front of me. He was dressed in a light suit. He told me not to be afraid. I felt faint; I am not sure if it was from fear or the odor I smelled.”

She paused and looked at me. “Have you ever been to

Yellowstone National Park?" she asked.

"Many times. I live near Yellowstone," I replied.

"If you go to Old Faithful or those boiling pots. It was the same smell."

"Do you mean sulfur?" I asked.

"Yes. It was the same smell, I remembered from Yellowstone. Like rotten eggs. It was overpowering. I remembered the same smell in chemistry class. Yes, sulfur. That's what I smelled."

"Yes, that smell can be unbearable."

"Anyway, the space man approaches me and says that he has been coming here for a long time. That he watched me grow up and that he has always wanted to say hello to me and asked me about my horses."

"About your horses?" I asked

"He wanted to know about the digestive system of a horses. He asked about how much water a horse drank. I was confused by his questions. I asked him if he had a horse and he said they had obtained some for their planet, but the horses were dying. He wanted to know what to do about it."

"I explained to him the kinds of food to feed and that horses have very sensitive stomachs and can die of colic if they get the wrong foods or get poisoned. I don't know if he understood me."

"Did he talk to you about anything else?" I asked.

"Nothing. Just horses."

"Did you ask him where he was from?"

"I was not thinking clearly. I didn't ask him anything." Jessie replied.

"Can you describe him?" I asked.

"He was average height, maybe 5 foot 10 inches tall. He was slim. I could not make out any other features. It was getting too dark. His suit glowed in the dark. So I could make out his outline. "

“After you talked about horses, what happened?”

“It was like he dropped to the ground and turned into a ball of light again and flew off to join the others. Later I saw them above the hill. They morphed into a huge craft and were gone. I have never seen them since, but once was enough. This was a different kind of UFO. From that time, I worried about my horse Thunder every day. I never left him in the pastures by himself. I was afraid they would come and take him. I don’t know what I would do without Thunder. When I go to Wyoming in the fall, I plan to take him. I got a rodeo scholarship.”

A few months later, I was on my way to Denver and stopped off in Casper during the National College Finals Rodeo. Astride Thunder, Jessie appeared one with the stallion. All the newspaper reports were true—she was a champion barrel racer. That evening, after the rodeo, I invited Jessie and her parents to join me for a late night dinner. We spent the night catching up on the events on the reservation and Jessie’s first year at the University.

“I haven’t seen him since,” Jessie said, as we walked to our cars. “At first I worried about the horses they had undoubtedly stolen from someone. Now the only thing I can do is hope that the little information I gave them helped to save the horses that were alive. If they ever come back after I graduate, I will be able to help them more.”

The next morning I drove on to Denver. As I pulled out of the parking lot, I saw Jessie and waved. I figured if anyone could teach the star travelers how to care for horses, it would be Jessie. I know I would trust her with mine.

Chapter 20
Liberators from Space

Indian boarding schools were first established by Christian missionaries. Financed by the federal government, the intent of the schools was to assimilate Indian children. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) assumed the responsibility for the education of American Indian children, removing the authority from the churches. The primary goal of the schools continued to be assimilation.

The children in these schools were immersed in a European-American culture that included: cutting hair to match European standards, outlawing Indian languages and replacing traditional names with Euro-American names, and dressing students like their Euro-American peers. The curriculum was mostly vocational, although students were taught to read and speak English.

The school experience was difficult for the children who were separated from their families, sometimes for years. They were encouraged to abandon their identities as American Indians and even to forget about their families. There have been documented cases of sexual, physical, and mental abuse in the boarding schools. Even though a few boarding schools continue to operate around the country, tribal nations have insisted on community schools since the mid-1970s.

In this chapter, you will meet an individual who experienced an encounter at a boarding school. The event allegedly contributed to the eventual closing of the school.

Wanbli Numpa aka Germaine

"Germaine is not my real name," he told me, as we found a quiet place in the bleachers to talk. "It's a name the nuns gave me

when I went to boarding school. Call me Gerry or anything. Not Germaine."

I looked at the middle-aged man who sat beside me on the 50-yard line of the football field. It was spring and the off-season. There were no football
players or fans in sight. At one time, I suspected he was a handsome man. I had seen so many men like Gerry, men who were beaten by the system. They aged before their time. They lost the lust for life; the gleam in their eyes was gone.

"How did the nuns name you Germaine?" I asked.

"When they shipped me away to boarding school, I didn't have a birth certificate; at least that is what my mother told me. So the school took it upon themselves to get me a birth certificate. The nuns chose the name Germaine. I hate that name."

"I'm sorry about that. What name did your mother give you?" I asked.

"Wanbli Numpa," he replied. "I was called Two Eagle, not Germaine Numpa. Germaine Two. Can you imagine? That's how stupid they were. They did not understand that Numpa was not my last name."

"Wanbli Numpa is a wonderful name," I replied. "Did you know that you can apply to the courts to change your name?" He looked at me rather surprised and shook his head. "You should go to court and change your name. If you want, I will get all the information for you and the application. I don't think it is a difficult process."

"Thank you, I would like to do that," he said. "My mother is gone now. She used to cry because everyone called me Germaine. To her, I was always Wanbli Numpa."

"From what your sister told me," I said, "something happened at the boarding school concerning a UFO. She said it led to the eventual closing of the school. Can you tell me about it?"

“Do you know what time it is?” Wanbli asked.

“It’s nearly 4 p.m.,” I replied.

“I’m sorry, but I have to report for work. I’m the janitor’s helper at the school. I go to work at 4 p.m. There’s a time clock.”

“Of course I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to make you late,” I replied, following after him as he headed for the main building.

“Is there a time I can talk with you?” I asked.

“I get a lunch break at 9 p.m.”

“I could come to the school about 9:00. I’ll pick up some sandwiches.”

“Sounds good. I will watch for you.”

At 8:45 p.m. I pulled into the parking lot. Wanbli was standing by the door and opened it as I slipped inside. He ushered me into the teacher’s lounge and I opened the large pizza box. I put two slices of pizza on a paper plate and handed it to him. I watched him closely as he began to eat. His unkempt hair and missing teeth suggested that if he were not homeless, he was close to it, and yet there was a special quality about him, a humility that made him appear almost regal at times.

“I hope you like pizza. It’s all I could find,” I said.

“Pizza’s my favorite,” he replied.

After he had consumed two pieces, he pulled another out of the box and wiped his hands on the paper napkins. “You asked me about the UFO event at the mission school,” he began. “I remember it as if it happened yesterday. We had finished our study period for the night and had been sent to our rooms. There were two dorms halls. One for boys between the ages of 6 and 12; one for the 13 and up group. I was in the younger boys hall. Generally the brothers checked on us around 9 p.m. and turned out the lights. Most of us were in bed when a blinding light lit up the room. As the brightness decreased, we jumped out of bed and headed toward the windows. The brothers appeared and warned

us to stay calm."

"Were the brothers curious about what was going on outside?" I asked.

"Only Brother Paul. He looked out of the windows with us, but the others
hurried out of the room for some reason."

"What did you see when you looked outside?" I asked.

"As I stood there with my face pressed against the cold window glass, I could make out half of a perfect circle that was hanging over the dormitory. I could only see part of it, the rest being out of my range of vision. It was suspended in mid-air. There was eeriness about it. I knew it was not from this world. I looked behind me for a retreat plan in case it came through the window. Brother Paul was on his knees, repeating the rosary."

"How did the other boys react?" I asked.

"Some of the younger boys were crying. I don't think it was so much from the UFO as it was from the shrill voice of Brother Paul reciting the rosary. One of the older boys, Benny Crow Boy, opened the door and all of us followed him down the stairs and out of the building. I was one of the first to step outside into the courtyard. I looked in the direction of the priests' quarters. That's when I saw Father Dominic standing in the doorway paralyzed by the scene unfolding before him."

"What exactly did you see?" I asked him.

"I saw a round, silver craft. Probably 50 or 60 feet in diameter. It hovered about 25 feet above the dormitory. There were red flashing lights that glowed in various levels of intensity. It was at least four or five stories high. There were small windows on what I would say would have been the second or third levels. There was no sign of life on board. It stayed there for probably 15 or 20 minutes and then disappeared into the night sky. But that was not the end of it. Each night for the next seven nights, the same

event occurred at exactly the same time. It was an amazing sight, especially for a 12-year-old boy. Back in those days, we didn't have TV, but we managed to pass around forbidden space comic books and we were all positive that these visitors were from outer space. After the first night, we were locked in our bedrooms so we never made the trip outside again. We knew the visitors were there from the light that filtered through the windows turning our room into daylight."

"Did the priests or nuns ever talk to you about the night's events?" I asked.

"The only thing that we were told is that anyone caught out of his bed and sleepwalking again would be severely punished. In other words, they tried to make us believe we were sleepwalking. We all knew differently, but we said
nothing. We did not want to get punished, but in private we fantasized that the space travelers had come to watch over us and to protect us from the cruelty of the nuns."

"Can you remember any other event associated with that night?" I asked.

"Well, I don't know if it was related, but about a week after the sightings, our entire dormitory came down with a strange flu. Our bodies were covered with a strange rash. One of the nuns who acted as a nurse quarantined our entire dorm. We were not allowed to go to the cafeteria or to classes. Food was delivered on a cart to the room by nervous attendants wearing masks. Most of us reveled in our unsupervised days of freedom away from the prying eyes of the nuns. It was short-lived though. A week later, the rash was gone."

"I heard a story that the boarding school was closed down because of some mysterious events that happened at the school. Do you think the UFO was the mysterious event?" I asked.

"As time passed, the event just became a part of the

mythology associated with the school. Students returning home for the summer told their families about the flying saucer, and many parents were afraid to send their children back to the school. My mother told me that she was not going to send me back to the school after talking with some of the other parents. I heard later that the school's enrollment fell off dramatically. Eventually, the Catholic Church closed the school due to lack of enrollment."

"Did you ever tell your mother about that night?" I asked.

"No. I hated that school and I didn't care what she had heard as long as I didn't have to go back. Sometimes I think about that night though. I remember when I was a kid at that school, I was praying that the unearthly visitors had come to save us, and in a way, they did just that. Whatever happened that week was indirectly responsible for the school's closing. Who knows, maybe that was the intent of the space travelers. I like to think it was their way of bringing an end to the injustice suffered by the children in that school."

Wanbli and I have remained friends. He frequently calls to update me on the politics of his school. Last year he was promoted to janitor and now takes a lot of pride in "his school." Two months ago, he was elected to the Board of the Tribal College. Almost a year to the day of our first meeting, the state court accepted his petition to change his name. He is now officially Wanbli Numpa. I hosted a pizza party for him in the school cafeteria a few weeks after his new birth certificate. Several of the teachers and some of his friends attended. I had the honor to introduce him to the community as Wanbli Numpa. We ended the night with a burning ceremony. There was not a dry eye in the house when Germaine Numpa's birth certificate went up in flames.

Chapter 21
Two Women Speak Their Minds

Although alien abductions are generally reported by adults, there is evidence that young children have had similar experiences. Often children who report being abducted have a family history of abduction.

Jenny Randles, in a study investigating the motivations of the alleged abductors, discovered that out of 50 cases she examined, all of the abductees, except four, were under the age of 40. The majority of older people who have been abducted report they have been rejected for medical reasons. Randles suggests that alien abduction is a young person's experience. Some have suggested that this is because of the reproductive focus of many of the abductions.

In this chapter, a 79-year-old Cherokee/Choctaw lady from West Virginia claims she escaped the clutches of alien beings because of her age, and an elderly lady from the Northern Plains claimed the aliens were only interested in her age.

Auntie Eve

"You're the UFO lady, right?" she asked, as I settled onto the worn couch in her living room with my tape recorder carefully placed between us.

"I'm not sure I deserve such a title," I laughed. "But I'm collecting stories about UFOs and alien visitations, and your niece told me that you have had several experiences."

"I told my niece not to tell anyone about the UFOs," she said.

“Annie and I went to school together,” I said. “She said your story was so unusual that I should interview you for a book I hope to write about American Indians and Star People.”

“But you don’t live here anymore, right?” she asked, ignoring my explanation for visiting her.

“Right. I live in Montana.”

“That sure is a long way from West Virginia,” she replied. “I have never been to Montana. It’s too far. I never left the state but once. I went to visit my niece down in Florida one year. That was the year that John Denver came out with that song, “Country Roads.”

“I remember that song,” I said.

“Well, that song made me so homesick, that my niece had to bring me home. I just couldn’t stay in Florida one day longer. Besides, I don’t like being away from my home. It ain’t much, but it’s home.”

Auntie Eve’s home consisted of three rooms: a kitchen, bedroom, and a small living room organized around a potbelly stove. A couple of outbuildings set up against the hillside served as homes for a litter of pigs and her chickens. A garden plot was off to the right side of the house. An outhouse was off to the left. A hand water pump stood by the steps leading to the porch. It was the only water source for the house.

“Down in Florida, there are too many lights,” she began. “Those people wouldn’t know if a UFO landed or not. Out here in the mountains, you see a lot of things. I can tell you many stories, but the most frightful occurred right here on my front porch. It’s a sad state of affairs when them aliens can come and take you right out of your house and the government claims they don’t even exist. I’d like to bring one of them Congressmen out here and let him be abducted. Maybe then they would change their tune. Maybe George W. or old Daddy Bush. Give them a dose of reality.”

Eve, who was 79 her last birthday, could have easily passed for 60. She credited it to her Cherokee/Choctaw heritage. Her mother, who was a full-blood Cherokee, had lived to be 101. Her grandmother had passed at 99. She wore her hair wound into a bun at the back of her neck, the same way she wore it since she was 16. She never married, although she proudly declared, "that doesn't mean I'm a virgin."

"When did you first see the aliens?"

"It all started when I began missing chickens. Every few nights, three or four of my chickens would come up missing. I checked the hen house and the pen and could find no sign of entry. So I decided to sit up and watch. I thought maybe I could catch someone stealing them. I keep a shotgun loaded at all times since I live alone, and I just took it and went out on the porch to watch. About 11 p.m., it happened."

"Can you tell me exactly what you saw?" I asked.

"The first thing I remember was an orange light. It lit up the yard with a glow. Not like daylight, just a glow. I had never seen anything like it. I cocked my gun and steadied it against that post waiting to see what was going to happen. All of a sudden I saw a figure walking toward me. I tried to fire my shotgun, but it didn't work. I thought I had forgotten the safety and I checked it, but it was off. The figure just kept coming. I stood up and tried to pull the trigger again and nothing happened. Then the creature took my gun and dropped it on the floor, and then told me to follow it."

"Did the being speak to you?" I asked.

"I just told you, it told me to follow him."

"I meant to ask if you heard him speak, or if it was something you heard in your mind." She stopped for a moment and then shook her head.

"That's a good question. I just knew. They never talked like you and I are talking. I'm not sure how I knew."

“Are you saying the creature did not speak like humans speak?” I asked.

“I don’t know. All I know is I followed it. I call it, IT, because it was not human. It was not a him or a her. It was an IT. We came to a dark, metallic- gray oblong craft over the hill there. It was huge. It looked like a fuel tank on one of them big gasoline trucks only about six or seven times as big. It filled up the whole field. When the boys were home we used to plant field corn down there for the chickens during the winter. It is about two acres. It was a big thing. I remember walking into the craft and being taken to a room and left alone.”

“Can you tell me what they looked like?”

“Well, one thing is for sure. They don’t look like little green men,” she said. “More like bugs to tell you the truth… big bugs. They have thin, long legs and arms, and their arms were much too long for their bodies. Their necks were long and thin, and their heads were the size of a big watermelon. They had strange goggle-eyes and no noses, as we have, only small holes on either side of the raised area between their eyes. Their mouth had no lips, only thin cuts as if made by a razor. Their faces are half human, half insect. I think I have seen both males and females. The females are much bigger than the males…much taller and heavier. I thought about how nice it would be if that was the way it was in the human world. Women wouldn’t have to worry about their weight.” She paused and laughed. “Annie wouldn’t always have to be on a diet and that creep of a husband, Tom, couldn’t make his snide remarks about her weight all the time.”

I listened to her comments and was amazed at her critical observation skills and her ability to remember small details even under a stressful situation.

“Did the creatures say anything else to you?”

“I remember wondering how something so ugly could be so

advanced. I was thinking about that when they told me they were visitors from far away. I think they were mind readers, too."

"Why do you think that?" I asked.

"Remember I was telling you how I was thinking about them being so ugly and wondering how something so ugly could be so advanced?"

"Yes. I remember."

"Well, right after I thought that, one of them told me that in their world 'beauty' was not emphasized. They said beauty had no purpose. They also found humans quite ugly. I was amused by that, and I thought it was a case of pot calling kettle black. From their comments, I decided they read my mind. Why else would that creature say such a thing? I had just been thinking about how ugly they were."

"Did the beings tell you their purpose?" I asked.

"They talked about charting life in the universe. They were recording it or something like that. To me they were simply thieves. No better than the Saunders boys down the road. They took all my chickens and pigs and even stole my pet rabbit. They said it was for science, but their science can be damned. They experimented on people just like they experimented on chickens and pigs. I saw a room filled with humans lying on tables and packed away in storage bins."

"What do you mean, storage bins?"

"Well, they had several layers of tables along the side of the wall and people were stacked in them."

"Are you talking about shelves on the side of the wall?" I asked.

"I guess they could be called shelves. The people appeared to be sleeping and unharmed. I ran into one of the rooms and tried to wake everybody up. I figured all of us together could capture a few of them, but no one responded to my yells or touch. It was

strange."

"Did they experiment on you?" I asked.

"No. One of the females said I was too old. They needed younger specimens. So old age had its benefits in this case," she laughed.

"Why do you think they took you on board the craft?" I asked.

"Probably afraid I would contact the sheriff. Those creatures choose isolated places to land and do their dirty work. That way, no one ever believes the victims. They are clever little bastards, and I guess if I was like them, I wouldn't want to bring attention to myself. They have powerful medicine. With a touch, they make people forget everything. With a look, I've seen them paralyze people or put them in trances. They're powerful. My little farm up in this holler is a ways off from other people, and with the mountains nobody knows they are here but me. And who's going to believe a crazy old Indian woman who lives up in this holler all by herself?"

"When you were on board how many humans did you see?"

"Many. I would say 20 or 30 at least. Some of them were lying on tables like in a hospital room. Others were sitting around looking dazed."

"Why do you think they let you see this?"

"What can I do about it? Nobody is going to listen to me. Like I said, I'm an old woman. People would laugh at me. These creatures keep me a prisoner until they've finished their dirty work and then let me go. Without proof they were here, the sheriff isn't going to listen to me."

"How many times have you seen them?" I asked.

"About six times they've come."

"Are they the same ones?" I asked.

"Well, they look the same. The whole experience made me

realize that there is more out there than we want to believe. How do you think the folks would react to find out that there are big bugs out there that are smarter than we are?"

"I really don't know," I replied.

"Well, I got an idea," she said. "Think about it. Take that bunch that goes to the Church of God or the Holy Rollers. They think that man was made in God's image. Now if they find out that there is something that is smarter than them and it doesn't look like them, then what might God look like? I think that would mess them up."

"What about you? Does it bother you?"

"It doesn't bother me that they exist. I'm not a holy roller, so it doesn't bother me in the least. I figure God could create all kinds of things. I just wish there is some way I could get some proof or something. It does no good to tell these stories if you can't prove them."

"I appreciate you telling me your story. If I ever write a book, I will make sure that your story is told. There will be those who will believe you."

"I have nothing to gain from telling you this story. I'm just telling you what happened to me. That's all. It makes me no never mind."

I haven't seen Anne or her grandmother since my initial visit, but the highlight of my trip to West Virginia was my visit with Auntie Eve.

Talie

Talie lived behind the small Catholic Church located in a small remote village of 10 houses on the reservation. She told me that when she died, she planned to have a Catholic funeral, but that she was still a believer in the traditional ways. Although she was 89 and had outlived all of her siblings, she was alert and active.

The day I met her, she took me on a walk to show me where a spacecraft frequently landed. Along the way, she took time to pause and educate me about the uses of various wild plants that were growing along the pathway.

When I asked Talie the time of the last sighting, she looked at me and said, “I have been seeing the star beings all my life. The first time I was about 8 years old. I was berry picking down by the river. I watched the craft come down and land across the river. I crossed the river, stepping carefully on the rocks so I didn’t get my feet wet. I was curious; I had never seen anything like it. When I got within 20 feet, a door opened and I walked inside. I remember that the star beings made me feel welcome. There were two women. One brushed my hair and told me it was beautiful.”

“Were you afraid?”

Talie shook her head. “I thought they were friends of my grandmother.”

“Why did you think that?” I asked.

“I’m not sure. Maybe they told me. I visited them about every year when they came. Sometimes I took them flowers and sometimes rocks. My grandmother told me that rocks had souls, and I tried to explain that to them. I don’t think they understood. But they did teach me how to heal with my hands.”

I must have looked surprised, so she repeated the statement. “The star doctors taught me how to cure diseases with my hands. They taught my grandmother how to heal too. People used to come from all over for healings.”

She invited me to walk with her to the river. On the bank, she pointed across the stream at the site where the space travelers would come to visit. “My grandmother, her name was Apple Woman because when she was born she had red cheeks like an apple, lived until she was 104. When she died, the star beings seemed very sad that she was gone. But every year they come back

and I meet them and take them herbs."

"So, it sounds like you are carrying on the work of your grandmother, is that correct?" I asked.

"My grandmother wanted me to carry on her work with the star beings," she said. "I never married. I don't have any children. So there is no one to carry on my work. I am not going to live as long as my grandmother. Soon I will pass, too, and I worry that they will no longer have a contact."

"Can you describe the Star People?" I asked.

"They are fair and tall and thin. They are much smarter than us but interested in our ways. They travel the stars learning from others throughout the star system. They collect information on the aging process of Earth people. They are trying to learn why we die so young. The Star People live much longer than we live."

"Did they tell you how long?" I asked.

"A normal age for them is 1,000 Earth years. They don't have diseases like we do. Alcohol and tobacco use is not used by their civilization. Individuals choose their jobs early in life and stay in that job forever. They become experts in their field, which results in many discoveries that improve their lives. The star doctors visit earth all the time. They mostly observe, but there are 'helpers' all over the world who serve as contacts. Both my grandmother and I have been their helpers. The Star People call themselves 'Observers.' They brought life to this planet and they study how it has changed."

"Can you remember anything else you learned from them?"

"Yes. They were not violent. I was told that there were four violent species in the universe. Humans were one of them."

On our way back to her house, we met the priest of the Catholic Church who visits the community once a week and on Sunday for mass. He invited us into the small church for beef stew in his office. "I made this last night and put it in my crock pot," he

explained. We sat around his desk and ate the stew while Talie explained the reason for my visit. He did not seem to be surprised by her UFO visitations.

When I asked him if he had ever seen a UFO, he leaned back in his chair and replied, "Unofficially, yes. Officially, no."

When I asked for an explanation, he said that the Church had not taken an official position on UFOs, so that he was not free to discuss it publicly. He was clear, however, that he had seen UFOs, and he did not doubt Talie's experiences. He also confirmed that he had witnessed the UFO landing in the field across the river, but that he had never accompanied Talie to the site.

When I asked him if he were willing to tell me about his experiences, he replied, "Given my position, I would prefer not to talk about it." Although he did confirm that he knew they were real and "definitely not of this earth."

Over the next five odd years, I often stopped to see Talie when I visited the reservation. She remained strong and alert until her death at 95. On the day of her funeral, several people saw a UFO appear in the sky and hover there. I was one of them.

Chapter 22
They Will Be Gone When I Am 25

Washington State has had its share of UFO sightings. A long series of UFO-like events took place on the Yakama Indian Reservation in south-central Washington state. While the reports peaked in 1972-74, the phenomenon continues to this day.

The Yakama Tribe has legends and an oral history of interaction with Star People. The Tribe has stories of "little people" known as "stick Indians" and legends of light forms. Modern-day reports include close encounters with humanoids, odd mental phenomena, and strange creatures. There have also been cases where lights have interacted with witnesses.

In 2003, a Yakama teenager talked about a life of ongoing abductions, which began at the age of 5.

Tiffany

I was introduced to Tiffany by her Aunt Helen. Tiffany was 17 the first time I met her. At the time, she appeared to be an ordinary teenager with the usual interests: boys, parties, and cell phones. Although she was slightly overweight, she was a standout athlete in track.

"School isn't so bad," she said, as she ordered a large order of chili fries and a Cherry Coke. "I hope you don't mind. I didn't eat lunch in school today and I'm hungry." We were the only customers in the Bear's Den Diner near the high school where Tiffany was a senior.

"Not at all," I replied. "Order whatever you like."

“I heard about you. My Auntie Helen calls you the UFO lady. She said you collect stories about aliens or Star People. That’s what the elders call them.”

“I’ve been doing it for a long time. People hear about my research and come to me and tell me their stories. But tell me, what do you call them: aliens or Star People?” I asked.

“Well, I call them aliens because they are from another planet. I do have a story to tell. It’s been going on for a long time now.”

“Your Auntie Helen said you have been in contact with the aliens since you were 5 years of age. Could you tell me about that?” I asked.

“When I was 5 years old, I went into the woods near our home with my grandmother to hunt for wild herbs. We always did that in spring. I loved my walks with Grandma. She took the time to explain everything to me. It was springtime and I loved the warm days and the smell of spring, the first flowers, the birds building their nests. We walked down a long path and came upon a clearing where my grandfather planted corn. Near the south end of the field, there was a metallic object, round, but the best way I could describe it is that it looked like a huge toy top. As we approached, a door opened and we walked inside. There was a woman standing there. I can’t remember much about her, and this is going to sound silly, but she glowed.”

“Glowed?”

“Yes. Glowed. It was like there was a shining light around her. She glowed.” Tiffany paused for a moment, as if trying to find another way to express herself, and then continued. “It seemed like she knew my grandmother. They greeted each other like friends and my grandmother handed her a bag of herbs. One by one they examined each plant and discussed it. I think my grandmother was teaching her the way to use it to heal people. I could not hear them speak, but I remember various gestures, like pointing to different

parts of the plant, which led me to believe that was what was going on.

“Before we left, I was lifted onto a table by this strange woman. My grandmother stood by my side and held my hand. This strange woman called me ‘Grandchild.’ I remember feeling very confused. I did not like this woman who called me her grandchild. I had a grandmother and she was beside me. This new grandmother looked into my ears, she cut off a sample of my hair and one fingernail. She scrapped my arm and then stuck this thing to my skin that looked like a gun or something like that, only it was fatter, and she pulled a trigger and pain shot through my arm. I remember screaming and my grandmother just stood there. When she pulled the gun away, I looked at my arm and it had four pinpricks of blood. It bruised immediately. Then this woman lifted me off the table, and I remember kicking her as hard as I could, but she didn’t even flinch. Afterwards, my real grandmother took my hand and we walked out of the craft and continued collecting herbs. That was it. Swear to God.”

“Did you ever talk to your Grandmother about the event? “

”She died when I was 10, but I remember once I brought it up and she said I was not supposed to talk about those things. I never wanted to go back into that field again. Despite my grandmother’s calmness, I was very frightened by the whole event. Perhaps if she had lived I would understand their purpose, but she died before I learned why she would encourage me to go with them.”

“Do you remember the next time you were abducted?”

“It was the next year. This time I was alone. We went huckleberry picking. My Dad gave us each a section to pick. Even though I was only 6 years old, I was expected to pull my share. He found me a nice patch with lots of berries. Just as I settled myself into serious picking, I was led away by two women. I was taken onboard a craft and placed in a room with other children. Some

were crying. Others were napping. One by one, each one of us were removed and when it came my turn, the same thing was repeated. A sample of my hair was taken, a cutting from my fingernails, but again, this metal gun appeared. I started to struggle and the next thing I knew, my older brother was beside me putting berries into my bucket reminding me that Dad said if we didn't work, we didn't eat. He wanted to know what I had been doing, and I told him that I went for a walk with two friends. He told me there was nobody there but me and I was just daydreaming. So that was the end of that."

"So was that the end of your encounters?"

"They come every year. Two other times I was with my grandmother. She acted as though they were her friends, but it continued after she passed. It was always the same routine. Sometimes I thought they were interested in the aging process and that was why they were collecting specimens from my body every year. They were probably doing the same thing to all the other children I saw there."

"What do they look like?"

"Like us. They look like ordinary people except for a strange luminous glow. Sometimes they float instead of walking. Their lives must have no stress. There is no pain or worry lines on their faces, and if you did not know better, you would think they were all the same age—except for the grandmother who shows up occasionally."

"When you were younger, you said you were afraid of them. Are you still afraid?" I asked.

"I'm definitely afraid. I'm annoyed, too."

"Can you explain?" I asked

"It is inconvenient to be taken away, especially when I have nothing to say about it."

"Have you ever told them how you feel?"

“I did tell them. They told me that it was my birthright, whatever that means. I can do nothing about it. I only hope it stops soon. I want to go to Montana State University where you teach next year. I don’t want to spend my life being taken on board spaceships. That would be hard to explain to a boyfriend or husband.” She finished the plate of chili fries and asked the waitress for a refill of her Cherry Coke. “Maybe when I get to the University, it will be harder for them to take me unnoticed. We are so isolated here on the reservation.”

“When you first met the aliens, you talked about an old woman who called you grandchild. But since then, have you met other aliens and can you describe them?” I asked.

“When I was a little girl, I only met the woman who called me grandchild. She looked old to me. Much older than my grandmother. She was thin and wore a long robe. Her hair was white and very thin. She was as white as paper. No color at all.” She paused as the waitress brought her another Cherry Coke. “Lately I have seen others. They are different. If you look into eyes they hypnotize you. Their eyes are spellbinding. And as hard as I try to avoid eye contact, I keep looking into their eyes. It is as though I am willed to look at them despite every effort to look away. They have covers over their eyes like big, round goggles. Once I saw one without goggles and he had eyes that were like cat eyes. Those eyes haunt me in my sleep. I shiver just thinking about them.”

Her body trembled and she wrapped her arms around herself as though trying to ward off a chill.

“Do you still see the Grandmother even though you are seeing the new aliens?” I asked.

“Yes. She’s still there, but she no longer seems to be in charge. Maybe she was never in charge. I don’t know, but lately I have been getting a feeling that their intentions toward me are no longer

kind. I'm frightened of them."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Their examinations are different. I believe they want to impregnate me. I'm worried. Their attention is getting more sexual. It scares me."

"Can you explain?"

"It is embarrassing. I'm sure they took my virginity. One time they abducted me, I hurt a lot down there, and when I took a bath, my panties had blood. It was not the time for my period. Every year since, I have felt the same pain, as though they are invading my body. I think they are raping me and I can't do anything about it."

I heard the anxiousness in her voice. It was obvious that her fears were not without cause. "Can you elaborate?"

"They asked me questions about conception and about ovulating. I was not sure myself. I had to look those things up in the library. I am worried they want to make me have an alien baby or even force me to have sex with someone as an experiment. That's why I wanted to talk to you. Have you talked to others who have been able to escape their abductions?"

"Only three," I replied.

"How did they stop it?" Tiffany asked.

"All were males, no females. And in every case, the individuals demanded that they be free of abduction. And it worked. They just said they had been subjected to their abduction for too long and wanted to be free. According to the males I interviewed, the abductions ceased."

"Do you think it would work for me?" she asked.

"I don't know, but it's worth a try," I responded.

"You could demand they leave you alone. I interviewed a young man who did just that and they actually went away, and the last time I saw him, they had not returned in five years."

“Thanks. I will give it a try,” she said. I heard the relief in her voice, but I could not feel happy for her. I was not at all convinced this approach would work for females as it had for the males I interviewed

“Perhaps another thing you could do is make sure that you are never alone. Maybe that will discourage them.”

She shook her head. “Nothing stops them. They take me right under the noses of my family. At first, my parents thought the abductions were my imagination. Then one night I stayed at Auntie Helen’s and they came for me. She woke in the middle of the night and I was gone. She found me the next morning wandering on the highway about three miles from the house.”

“She told me about that.” I replied.

“It scared her too. After that, she tried to make sure someone was with me, but that didn’t seem to matter. I think they can hypnotize other people when they want to take you and no one remembers anything. I think they put my whole family in a trance.”

Tiffany enrolled at Montana State University the next fall. She often stopped by my office to tell me about her classes and her grades. Sometimes, the two of us would find time to go to lunch. On more than one occasion, she called late at the night and told me she was frightened. On those nights, I drove to the dorms and picked her up. Frequently she spent the weekend with me. A year after she graduated, Tiffany called and told me that the last time she was abducted she asked the aliens to release her. According to her, she agreed to cooperate in return for her freedom. She said that when she reached the age of 25, they would not return. She has two more years to go.

Chapter 23
No Guns Allowed

There are several accounts of UFOs interfering with nuclear missiles sites. Pilots have reported chasing UFOs only to find their weapons becoming inoperable. Thousands of policemen have reported UFO sightings. Many have reported their weapons becoming inoperable, as well as their police vehicles.

One of the more interesting accounts happened on July 21, 2002, in Chaján, Argentina, when a Sergeant Arias, responding to an UFO report, went out to investigate. Arias claims that he came upon a triangle-shaped object with hundreds of portholes with dim lights. He reported the situation over his car's radio, and then his car stopped functioning. He got out of the car with his hand on his sidearm and that is the last thing he remembers. He was found an hour and a half later, his weapon cocked but unable to fire.

Sergeant Arias is not the only person to find himself in this situation, as this chapter demonstrates.

Sid and Eddie

I first heard about Eddie and his friend Sid from Eddie's sister. She warned me that both of them were reluctant to talk about the incident that happened one night on Highway 1086 at "Back of Beyond," her nickname for the isolated section of the highway in North Dakota where the encounter occurred. She told me that they felt that any publicity about the encounter could have serious consequences for their profession, and they chose to remain quiet about the event, swearing everyone they told to

secrecy.

On a trip through North Dakota in the summer of 2006 I was able to locate Eddie who agreed to talk to me on the condition that Sid would also agree. A day later, I met the two of them at a specified location. They greeted me when I got out of my vehicle at the designated rest stop and invited me to sit on the tailgate of Sid's pickup.

"It was about 2 a.m.," Sid began. "I know because I had just looked at my watch. I was returning home from Billings, Montana, after taking some things to my brother who lives there with a Crow girl from Pryor. I decided to drive back to North Dakota instead of staying overnight. It was Saturday night and I needed Sunday to grade papers and prepare for the week. I teach high school math. I left Billings after supper. Probably around 6 p.m. or so. It's about 400 miles, I guess. I figured with rest stops and a break for a bite to eat someplace, I should make it home around 2 a.m."

"What about you, Eddie? Where were you that night?" I asked.

"On the same road, Highway 1086, at the same time. Originally, I planned to go with Sid, but Dad needed some help on his ranch, so I begged off and helped my old man. I had been at a friend's house that night. There were a bunch of us single guys. We get together on Saturday nights, eat some pizza, play poker. It was late when I left, sometime after 1 a.m. It was a coincidence that we came upon the spacecraft at the same time. "

"Eddie, your sister told me that you and Sid have been friends forever."

"Our grandpas are friends, our dads are friends. We've known each other forever," Eddie replied.

"I've been looking out for this guy since he was a foot high," Sid said with a laugh.

I looked at the two best friends. Eddie was taller than Sid by

an inch or so, but Sid outweighed Eddie by at least 25 pounds. Both were muscular, the result of working on family ranches I suspected.

"We went to school together, "Sid said, "played on the same basketball and football teams, and worked for the same rancher in the summer. We went to the same college. Eddie had a basketball scholarship; I had a football scholarship. We have been teaching at the same high school since we graduated from college five years ago. I coach football and he coaches basketball, and we are each other's assistant coach. Yeah, I think you could say we are friends, but just friends, not companions, although my girlfriend sometimes accuses me of being married to Eddie." Sid laughed again. "I told her I could never marry anyone so ugly."

They both laughed again and did a fist bump.

"Does your girlfriend know about your encounter?" I asked Sid.

"No. I don't mean to sound negative, but girlfriends come and go. Sonya is a white girl, and even though she professes to 'love' my people, I think living on the reservation would be very difficult for her. I have no intention of leaving here. I have always been up-front with her about that. She comes from New Hampshire and I worry that the whole idea of marrying an Indian sounds romantic to her. If she ever had to live on the reservation for any length of time, I'm not sure she could deal with the isolation or the poverty."

"It's not the easiest gig," Eddie said. "We watched non-Indian teachers come here when we were kids in school, marry a local guy, and end up with a baby or two, and then they divorce because the woman wants to leave. It is hard for us to leave the reservation. There is a bond with the land and the people. It is difficult to explain."

"Anyway, I went to college so I could return home and work with my people," said Sid. "That's who I am. I can't take a chance

on telling her. Someday, if it ever gets that far, she may decide that she cannot live here with me, and if that happens, I don't have to worry that she will compromise me. For the time being, she is in graduate school and we only see each other once a month or during the holidays."

"I understand," I replied. "So who would like to tell me what happened?"

"Since it started with me, I guess I will begin," Sid replied. "As I said, I had just checked the time when suddenly, I saw this bright red light ahead. At first, I thought it must be a wreck or something, and all kinds of things were running through my mind. I wondered how many people were hurt and if someone had died. That's always a concern out here. Everybody knows everybody."

"Yeah, or they are related or married or exes," added Eddie.

Sid looked at his friend and nodded and then looked off toward the horizon before continuing. "All of a sudden, the red light disappeared, and while I am trying to understand what I have just seen, the red light appeared again, about 20 or 30 feet in the sky. I panicked and slammed on my brakes, swerving my truck to the left side of the road. At the same time this bright red light kept bearing down on me. Suddenly, the pickup died. The headlights went out. I desperately tried to start it again but the engine would not turn over. I thought maybe I flooded the engine. It was dark. So dark, I couldn't see my hand in front of me. The red light disappeared again. There were no houses on that stretch of the highway and it is black outside. I crouched down, looked upward toward the sky, but saw nothing but darkness. I reached for the glove compartment and found the flashlight. I decided to get out of my pickup. Suddenly the entire landscape was flooded with a bright white light. I looked toward the light saw a tall figure outlined in the bright light approaching the pickup. I reached under the front seat and pulled out my Colt 45. I kept it there,

loaded, in a gun case." He paused again and paced back and forth. "I was scared when I saw this stranger. Something just didn't add up. I took the safety off the gun. I wanted to be prepared. My father gave me the Colt 45. He bought it back in the '60s in Denver. He paid $95 for it new. When I graduated from college, it was my graduation gift. I figured if this guy was going to try something, I would show him my widow maker and he would back off."

"Did you get a good look at him?" I asked.

"I never got a look at his face. As he got closer, I tried to open the door, but I couldn't. I felt trapped. I put my whole weight against the door and tried to body slam it open, but it didn't budge. As I struggled inside the cab, I felt every muscle turn to liquid. Suddenly, I felt so tired. The light blinded me and I just wanted to go to sleep. I decided to rest and that is the last thing I remember until about 5 a.m. Eddie found me on the ground on the other side of the road."

Sid sat down beside me just as Eddie stood up.

"My experience was similar," Eddie began. "I couldn't have been more than a couple of minutes behind Sid on the highway, which was totally coincidental as I mentioned before. This is not a well-traveled road at 2 a.m. I came upon a straight stretch of the highway and that's when I saw a bright red light suspended in the sky. At first I thought it was a plane from up at the air base in Minot. It was strange though. I wondered why it was so low, but yet there was no other explanation. When I got closer, the light blinded me at first, but it suddenly dropped and set down on the ground beside the highway. The lights dimmed and that's when I saw the outline of a craft like a long cylinder on the ground. When I slowed to get a better look, I saw Sid's pickup. The backend was pointing upward and the nose of the vehicle was angled toward the

barrow pit. I recognized the pickup immediately. At that point, I didn't know what to do."

"What do you mean?" I asked, as I looked at the late model Chevy truck**.** It was red with various shades of orange-red flames climbing up the double doors of the cab.

"Well, for one thing," said Eddie, "my friend's pickup is sitting on the edge of the highway and it doesn't look like he parked it there. Some kind of a craft has landed beside the highway, and out of the corner of my eye, I saw the silhouette of a very short being walking toward me. Its gait was strange. It seemed to glide, not walk. Its arms were longer than the average person. It was like something out of a science fiction movie."

"This was where Eddie and I had different memories," Sid interjected.

"Can you explain?" I asked.

"I saw a tall silhouette," Sid replied.

"I saw a short silhouette," Eddie said. "It proved to be a significant difference. The stranger who approached me was no more than four feet tall, probably less, and although his silhouette was human, he was not. He was a cross between a big bug and maybe human. But he was not human."

"Can you go back to the point when you see the silhouette approaching you and you are worried about your friend?" I asked.

"Yes." Eddie replied. "I know I can't leave Sid if he is in trouble. I opened my car door and rushed toward the pickup. Suddenly, I'm paralyzed. I watched this stranger approach Sid's pickup. He pulled Sid out of the vehicle and walked off into the field with him. I wanted to go for help. My poker buddy's house was no more than 10 minutes away, but I couldn't move. It was a strange sensation. I could think, move my eyes, talk, but I cannot move, not even a finger. As I tried to get my head around what is

going on, I saw the top of the craft open up and another creature appeared, and together the two of them ushered Sid inside the craft. I struggled, but there is no point. Suddenly I realized that I am in similar danger, but I was helpless to resist. When I saw the approaching silhouette, I knew they were coming for me. Sid had been abducted by aliens and I was next."

"Did you ever get a good look at your abductor?" I asked.

"The one thing I remember most was a hand that looked like a claw with only three long fingers that reached for me and a large round head with bulbous eyes with vertical slits in them like cat's eyes. I admit they were terrifying."

"Anything else you remember?" I asked.

"One other thing. This creature had some kind of a thin headdress, like rubber almost. It was smooth and tight but I saw no bumps where ears should be. I focused on that one fact. That and that big round head and eyes. The eyes looked mechanical. They opened a closed like the lens of a camera."

"The next thing I remembered," said Sid, "was Eddie kneeling beside me. He was telling me to wake up. I wanted to open my eyes but they were glued together. I asked for water and Eddie returned with a bottle. I drank some and poured the remainder over my face. It was only then that I was able to pry my eyes open. When I sat up, I realized I was on the opposite side of the road from where the pickup was stopped. "

"What about you, Eddie? Do you remember anything differently?"

"Nothing. I woke up in the back seat of my car. I have no idea how I got there. I climbed out and started looking for Sid. That's when I saw him sprawled out in the field about 30 yards off the road. He was inside a fenced field. I climbed over and woke him up. Sid was sick. He threw up several times. We sat there until another colleague from school came along and stopped. He told

everyone at school that we must have been out partying all night."

"I was angry," Sid interjected. "I expected more from a colleague. Instead, we go to school and all kinds of rumors were circulating. People made remarks about it for weeks. That's the one thing bad about the reservation. People like to gossip."

"Sid and I felt alone," Eddie said. "We couldn't tell anyone what had happened. We didn't want to be known as the two coaches in North Dakota who had been abducted by aliens. Finally, we decided to go to the priest. Sid is a pretty devout member of the church. I grew up in it, but for me, I can take it or leave it. Too much pain associated with the Catholic Church for me to be a real believer."

"Did you tell the priest what happened?"

"We did."

"And?" I asked anxiously.

"He told us that it was best to keep quiet about what happened," Sid replied.

"He said the Catholic Church secretly embraces the idea of extraterrestrials, but they do not admit it publicly. He also told us it would be better for our careers if we just didn't talk about it," Eddie added.

"He's right about that. We would never live it down and would probably ruin our position in the community and school," Sid said.

"And from what I understand, you have only told Eddie's sister, is that correct?"

"Yes. And now you. That is why you must swear to keep our story secret. If you write about it or talk about it, we do not want to be identified. If the word ever got out that we were abducted, we would not only have to deal with personal humiliation, but our competitors would taunt our students on the basketball court or the football field. It would make it difficult for them. We could

eventually be forced to leave our jobs, and we have no intention of letting that happened. We went to college so we could come home and serve our people. We don't want to jeopardize that. So we deal with what happened in our own way."

"Did either one of you get a good look at the spacecraft?" I asked.

"I didn't," Sid replied. "I just saw bright lights."

"I did," Eddie said. "It was a long, tube-like craft. On the front end was a huge red light. It was probably about 60 feet long. It was like a propane tank, only bigger. Underneath there were smaller white lights, possibly landing lights. The top of the craft opened up, but not like a hatch—it just opened and a bright light came out of the inside. It was blinding. I wondered how they could see in such bright light. Maybe that was the reason their eyes were so big. They needed big eyes to see." He paused as if thinking about his statement for a moment, and then continued. "When the creature touched me, it gripped with such force I could not get away from him. He had scrawny legs that reminded me of a grasshopper. "

"We were always taught that God created man in his own image. Well, if that is the case, who created that thing?" Sid asked.

"And what right does it have to come here and abduct us and we are helpless to do anything about it?" Eddie commented.

"I remember when I was a boy, I went to a Sundance ceremony with my grandfather. There were many elders there and they talked about Star People and space travel and mind travel. They said that the Star People brought us to Earth and that we are their children."

"I don't think they were talking about the things that took us," Eddie said.

"Maybe not, but that is what they said," Sid replied.

I never saw Eddie or Sid again. Eddie's sister keeps in touch

with me sporadically. Eddie is now married and the father of twin boys; their names are Edward and Sidney. Eddie was recently elected to the tribal council, but continues to coach basketball. Sid still teaches math and coaches football. Recently, he became engaged to a girl from South Dakota. Eddie's sister told me that neither of them had ever spoken about their encounter again.

Chapter 24
The Little People Are the Star People

The indigenous peoples of North America tell many legends of a race of "little people" who live in the mountains, in the woods, or near rock croppings. Among Great Lakes tribes, the little people are depicted in petroglyphs with horns and traveling in canoes. Among the Cherokee there are three types of little people: the Rock People, the Laurel People, and the Dogwood People. The Rock People are vengeful and steal children. The Laurel People play tricks and are generally mischievous. The Dogwood People are helpers and healers.

In the Northern Plains, several tribes have stories about the Little People. The Crow Indians consider the Pryor Mountains sacred because they are the home of a race of the little people who protect the tribe. Even today tribal members make offerings to the little people at Medicine Rock.

This chapter tells the story of a Blackfeet Indian who followed the tracks of the little people in the snow into the mountains near Glacier National Park.

Tom

I met Tom the first week I arrived in Montana. He was a student at the University working toward a master's degree. Over time, he and his wife became close friends. When I asked Tom if his tribe had any stories about little people, UFOs or aliens, he smiled and told me that there were many accounts of little people, but only one incident where he was directly involved.

“I was 10 years old at the time,” he began. “I remember because it was the first year I had a bicycle to ride to school. On one particular morning, I woke up to snow, which meant I had to walk. I didn’t mind walking in the snow. My grandfather said that snow was a magical white dust the Great Spirit used to hide all the ugliness of the world, so I was excited when I looked out the door and saw snow.”

He paused when my secretary entered my office with two cups of coffee and waited until she was gone. “On this particular morning, sometime between the time I left the front porch and the time I headed up the street toward the school, I decided to skip. In order to avoid the cops or any teachers that might see me, I headed down the alley toward the west side of town. I figured I could get out of sight and spend the day roaming around in the woods and make it back home just after school let out and no one would ever miss me. Most people didn’t have telephones in those days, so the school had no way of calling home to check on truancies. I’d have one of the girls with good penmanship to write a note the next morning, and no one would ever know I skipped.” He stopped and took a sip of his coffee. “There are many wonderful things to see at first snowfall if you know where to look.”

My experience that day was one of those wonderful things. He took another drink of his coffee, and then continued. “As I headed for the mountains, I knew I had to pass old man Wolf’s place. There was a chance he would tell my Dad I skipped school, but I figured if I was quick enough, he wouldn’t see me. As I sneaked around the backside of his property, he called out and said the little people were on the mountain. From as long as I remembered, I had heard about the little people from the elders of the tribe. I knew they frequented the mountains that the tribe called home for centuries, but I had never seen them. There were many stories about the little people who abducted children who were never seen

again, and so old man Wolf's warning stopped me dead in my tracks."

"Other tribes tell similar stories," I replied.

"As I stood there trying to decide what to do, Wolf came up to me. He guided me behind the barn and pointed to footprints about half the size of my foot. 'Those are their footprints. They lead up the mountain. If you want to take a look, give me a chance to eat my breakfast and I'll go with you,' he said. I didn't argue. I followed him around the barn and into his house."

"'Did you eat, boy?'" he asked. When I shook my head no, he invited me to join him for hot biscuits, jam, and coffee. After we had eaten our fill, he put on his coat and I followed behind him as we made our way up the mountainside, climbing slowly as he pointed with his cane to each tiny footprint in the snow. Occasionally, he stopped to catch his breath or point out a rabbit track, deer droppings, or a coyote track. We followed an uphill path through the dense woods for about two miles when he stopped and warned me of a clearing up ahead. 'That is where they land,' he said. 'We have to be quiet if we do not want them to see us,' he cautioned. We approached the clearing like mountain lions, creeping almost on all fours, hiding behind trees, listening for any sound or sign of the little people. We finally cleared the trees and crouched behind a large rock on the edge of the clearing. There was no one in sight. When he was sure that it was safe, we traced their footprints to a large barren circle. Something had melted the snow and left a perfect circle."

"Are you telling me that a spacecraft had set in the barren circle?" I asked.

"That's what old man Wolf said. They come to the meadow because people seldom venture up the mountain. They enjoy the mountain air and the beauty of the area."

"Did you see any other evidence that they arrived or left on a

spacecraft?" I asked

"Oh yes. Wolf pointed out their footprints. They led directly to the circle and then disappeared. He showed me the burned grass in the circle that he believed was caused by the craft."

"What was your impression of the situation?" I asked.

"I felt like I was privileged to see something that few people ever see. I saw Wolf in a completely different way. I understood that he had a connection with the little people, and just as he pretended to take care of me, he was, in fact, protecting them as well."

"Did he tell you anything about the origins of the little people?" I asked.

"He told me that the little people had gone home and that I would have to wait for another time to see them. But he had no sooner made that declaration than I caught a glimpse of something metallic in the sky. I looked in the direction of the reflection and saw a craft highlighted against the blue sky. The sun was reflecting off of it. After the craft disappeared across the sky, we turned silently and walked leisurely back down the mountainside. Before I went home, I ate cream corn and left-over breakfast biscuits with Mr. Wolf for lunch and spent the afternoon helping him split firewood."

"So you believe that the little people are Star People?" I asked.

"We have always known the little people came from the stars. In the old days, they lived in harmony with Indian people. They were our helpers, but then something happened and they went away to their home in the stars. They did not come back for a very long time. It was not until they went away and then returned that they began abducting the children." He stopped for a moment and smiled. "Every year after that, I skipped school on the first day of snow, and even though I saw the little footprints and followed

them to the clearing on the mountain, I never saw the little people. Wolf and I always made the journey together."

"Is Mr. Wolf still alive?" I asked.

"We made our last trip up the mountain my senior year in high school. Four months later I was drafted. I went to Wolf's cabin to tell him goodbye. We both knew I was headed for Vietnam. Over a lunch of cream corn and cold biscuits, he told me he could now pass to the other side without worry. 'They only take children,' he said. In his own way, he was telling me I was now a man. To this day when the first snow falls, I take the day off and I climb the mountain in search of the little people. Sometimes I see their footprints. I have never caught a glimpse of them, but I know they are there, just as I know that every fall, when I make that trip, that Wolf is beside me, teaching me about the forest and the ways of the Blackfeet people. Sometimes you don't have to see something to know that it exists."

Over the years, Tom has told me many stories about his experiences with the Star People. None of them were more memorable than the story of the boy who traced the little footprints in the snow. If I have learned anything during my journey in search of those who have had encounters with UFOs and Star People, it is, as Tom said, that "…you don't have to see something to know it exists."

Chapter 25
The Story of a Traveling Marble

The late Philip Klass, a well-known skeptic of UFOs and aliens, claimed that "...despite the fact that we humans are great collectors of souvenirs, not one of these persons [who have been aboard a UFO] has brought back so much as an extraterrestrial tool or artifact, which could, once and for all, resolve the UFO mystery." While there have been others who have pointed out the lack of physical evidence involved in an encounter with the Star People, I have found no reports of humans gifting Star People in UFO literature. With that in mind, the story you will read about in this chapter makes it even more unique.

Ivan and Cynthia/Lydia and Harold

"They are the keepers," Ivan told me as I sat in his kitchen and drank black coffee and ate lemon cookies from a box. His wife, Cynthia, busied herself at the kitchen sink, washing dishes and keeping an eye on a skillet of deer meat. Ivan and Cynthia had been married for 42 years and they often completed each other's sentences. They were the proud parents of four children and grandparents to nine. I had been invited to their home located in one of the Mutual Help low-income five-acre sites common in the Northern Plains states. One of their relatives told them that I was collecting UFO contact narratives and they sent word for me to stop by and visit with them.

"This is what was told to me by my grandfather," Ivan began. "He said that we came from the stars and we return to the stars.

Our ancestors live among the stars and keep watch over us. They are the keepers of this planet. We believe that the Milky Way was created by the star beings as a trail to guide us when we return to the heavens. Sometimes they come here to observe us. Sometimes they take us to visit them among the stars. This has been going on for centuries."

"Have you had personal contact with the Star People?" I asked. Ivan sat back in his chair and looked toward Cynthia. She turned and looked at him and gave him a knowing look of approval.

"We have both seen them, more than once," Ivan continued. "Sometimes they come and take water out of the lake. They just hover over it and you can see the water rise. It's like a downpour going upwards. Only it's a wide steady stream of water being sucked up beneath the craft. It's hard to explain. Other times they have landed near the lake. Both of us have seen them. They never approached the house, but we have both stood on the porch and watched them as they walk around their craft as though examining the outside structure."

"Has anyone else in your family or friends seen them?" I asked.

"Our children," Cynthia said, as she sat down at the table. "After a while they got used to it. It was normal for them."

"Did you ever talk about your experiences to anyone else?" I asked.

Ivan laughed. "Indians have always had a relationship with the star beings. No one is shocked by UFOs or experiences with so-called aliens. It has only been the television and the sci-fi channel that make up things that aren't true. The aliens are not aliens to us. They are us. They are our ancestors and keepers. They watch over us and take care of us."

"Why have you never told anyone about this? I asked.

“We are proud people. Everything we knew and told the white man, he changed or used to his own advantage. When we told him our history, he said it was just legends. We told him our ancient myths; he discounted them. Why would we tell them about the special relationship we have had for centuries with the Star People? They would say it was a myth. We have our secrets, and sometimes it is best to keep them that way.”

“So why did you choose to tell your story to me?” I asked. “I cannot guarantee you that I will ever write a book and, even if I do, I do not know if anyone will publish it.”

“I want to set the record straight about the star beings. There is so much confusion out there about what the truth is and what isn’t. Even our own children on the reservation are more impacted by television than they are the history of their people. The Star People are not to be feared. They are the ancestors of mankind. They are our keepers. Secondly, we wanted to tell our story to someone who has respect for Indian people, someone who is one of us. We are not looking for publicity. We want only to let people know that these events do occur, regardless of what any government says. The Star People come to Earth at will. We are in no position to stop them. Our weapons are worthless against them. But then, they have never used weapons against us either. They do not want to attack Earth. They are only interested because we are their children. If you never publish a book, it is okay, too; at least, you will know the truth and you can tell others.”

After a supper of deer steaks, mash potatoes and gravy, and lima beans, Ivan and Cynthia took me out to the lake and showed me the favorite stopping place of the Star People. “I think they know they are safe here. Our nearest neighbor is 12 miles away. Not many people come down this road unless they are coming to visit us. We are the last house on the reservation. If you go on down this road, you leave the reservation and it is not the most

popular route off the reservation. If people have a choice, they don't travel gravel roads."

As we stood by the lake enjoying the cool breeze coming off the water, Lydia, their oldest daughter, arrived with her two daughters. She brought her parents some eggs from her chickens and tomatoes from her garden. When they introduced me and told her the purpose of my visit, Lydia smiled and told me that once she and her brother Harold tried to communicate with the Star People.

"They landed near the lake, back close to the trees," she said, pointing at the windbreak on the west side of the property. "Mom and Dad were gone. I don't remember where they had gone or maybe they were out working in the fields. Dad raised hay and alfalfa for the horses and cattle when we were kids. On this particular day, the Star People came. It was late in the evening, but still daylight. Harold and I watched them land. We decided to go down to the lake and see if we could talk with them. When we got there, we stood outside the spacecraft. We waited patiently until a door slid open and two small star beings came out. I remember I waved, just a little wave. One waved back and Harold went to him and handed him a marble. Then they both turned and disappeared inside the spacecraft. The star man kept Harold's marble. We were so excited. We ran all the way home, and just as we got on the porch, we looked back and saw the craft rise and fly off to the west."

"That's interesting. So the alien took the marble with him," I commented.

"Oh yes. After that, Harold and I would sit outside at night in the summer and wonder where his marble was. We would make up stories about the 'traveling space marble.' I found a book in the library about the stars and we learned all the names of the different constellations and stars and challenged each other to tell stories about the Star People and the traveling marble. Just kid stuff,

actually." She stopped and gave a drink to her five year old. "Those were good days. I wish my kids had a life simple life like that. It was a good life."

I watched her hug her father's neck, and the look on her mother's face told me how proud she was of her daughter.

"I didn't find out that they had done that until a few weeks later," Cynthia said. "We always told the kids that the Star People were the Keepers and that they watched over us. We explained they should not interfere with their mission here. Of course, Ivan told them the old stories from his grandfather. We never thought they would go out and have contact with them. But we never taught them to be afraid so they were just curious and being kids."

"I still think of that marble though," said Lydia. "Harold does too. We were talking about it just last weekend. We were so innocent. We were raised by our parents to be generous so Harold gave them his favorite marble."

When I asked her to describe the space travelers, she said they were smaller than the average Indian. "They were small, maybe five feet tall. They had pink skin. They wore dark brown one-piece suits. The suits covered their heads like a hood, but they were skin tight like they were part of their body. They were delicate. Their bodies were very thin, but they did not have breasts like human females so I assumed they were male. They never spoke; nor did they make a sound. That's all I remember."

"I have always heard witnesses say that they had white skin, but never pink. Are you sure it was pink?"

"It was pink. Not white."

"What about their eyes?" I asked.

"I don't know. They had on these strange looking bulbous eyeglasses. I remember thinking I would like a pair." She paused, as though thinking. "We got a good look at the craft. We walked around it and counted off the steps. It took us 144 steps to get

around it. Now we were 9 and 10 so our steps were smaller than a foot, but it was still a large craft. It was a dull silver and circular. There was no opening for a door. When a door opened, we were surprised. The opening was like a V and it was like the sides just opened up. It closed and you could not see a doorway. It was like one piece. We could not see inside. There was no reflection or lights coming from inside. No windows. It was beautiful though. I remember wishing they would invite me inside."

I spent another hour with the family and followed Lydia back to town. We stopped off at the Dairy Queen, and I offered to treat her and her children to ice cream. Lydia agreed on the condition that she could invite Harold to join us. She called him on her cell phone and within 10 minutes he pulled into the Dairy Queen parking lot. He caught sight of us sitting at a picnic table, and after getting a banana split he joined us. As the children played, Lydia introduced me and asked him if he would be willing to share with me his experience with the star ancestors. He hesitated and Lydia assured him that it was okay. She explained that she had met me at their parent's house and that I was collecting testimony from Indians of all tribes.

"That must mean you are okay," he said, extending his hand. We shook hands and he tackled his banana split. "I don't know what you have been told so far, but I will tell you what I remember. Mom and Dad always taught us about the star beings and our heritage. Many times, we would see the star beings come down from the sky and land near our place. Dad always said that our place was safe for them. So one day, Mom and Dad went to town. I remember that Lydia and I were home alone. They took John and Case, our younger brothers, with them."

"I think you're right about that," Lydia interjected. "I told you that they might have been in the fields, but Harold's right. I remember now, we got home from school and they left us a note

and said they had taken Case to the doctor."

"That's right!" John replied. "I remember being upset that we didn't get to go to town."

"And I reminded you that if Case was sick, they had no choice but to leave us."

"She was always the smartest one and wisest one," he laughed.

"I was the oldest," she explained.

"Well anyway, we were feeding the pigs and giving them fresh water. That was our job."

Lydia nodded.

"All of a sudden they landed in the field by the lake. It was a warm evening. Nice evening. In May, I think. School was still in session, but it was warm."

"I don't remember the month," Lydia interjected.

"I remember it was May because that's when we, the boys in school, always brought our marbles to school and played. Before that the ground was either frozen or thawing, and it was too muddy. I'm sure it was in May. Anyway, it was still daylight. We got home from school around 5 o'clock. We had to ride a bus for about an hour. I remember there was still sunlight because the sun reflected off the spacecraft and blinded me a couple of times and I shielded my eyes."

"That's right. I remember the sun shining on the surface of the craft," Lydia agreed.

"I told Lydia I was going down there. She wasn't sure, but she was just as curious as I was. When we got there, we saw no one. I remember we walked around the craft counting off the steps. Then we stood there just waiting for something to happen. Suddenly a panel opened and two beings climbed out of the craft. They stood looking at us as if they didn't know what to do. I remember I waved at them. I think you did too," he said addressing Lydia.

“The last one waved back. I walked toward him and handed him my lucky cat’s eye marble. He took it and looked at it. Then closed his fingers around it, and then they climbed back into the craft and flew away.”

When I asked him if he could remember anything else about that evening, he told me that he and Lydia debated about telling their parents. They decided not to tell for fear they might get in trouble. Finally, they couldn’t keep it a secret and they told their father.

“We were always making up stories about the marble and what planet or star it might be visiting. I still think about it. Lydia never forgave me for giving him a marble. She said she would have liked to have given him something to take to the stars.” He paused and gave one of his nieces a bite of his melting banana split. “We saw them many times after that. In fact, I think the last time we saw them was when—last August?” he said directing his question to Lydia. Lydia nodded and wiped ice cream from her five year olds’ hands. “Lydia and I sometimes go to the house and help out our folks. They are not as young as they used to be, but they try to do the same things. So we go over and help Dad with the harvesting. They came that night and took water out of the lake. It was dark. They hovered over the lake and then moved upward into the sky and were gone.”

I asked them if their brothers Case and John had seen them as well. “Oh yes,” replied Harold. “They both saw them. Case lives up in North Dakota and has told me on several occasions that he has seen UFOs there. “

“John lives down in Arizona,” Lydia continued. “We call him ‘the educated one,’ but all of us got our degrees, just not as much as John. He’s a doctor. His wife is from down there. She doesn’t like the reservation so he doesn’t get home much.”

When I asked them if they passed the stories of the Star

People along to their children, they both nodded.

"It is our responsibility to teach our children the old ways and the old truths," Harold said. "The Star People are one of our truths."

I met both Harold and Lydia several times after that. Both of them hold professional positions in their community. Cynthia and Ivan continue to live on their farm, and Lydia, who was recently divorced, plans to move home to live with her parents.

Like Harold and Lydia, I often find myself thinking about the "traveling marble" and where it might be as I stand in my back yard and look at the stars. At the same time, I think about the innocence and generosity of a small boy who shared his most prized possession with the visitor from space.

Chapter 26
Four Police Officers Come Forward

One of the most famous UFO encounters involving Star People and the police occurred in Socorro, New Mexico, on April 24, 1964. Lonnie Zamora, a 31-year-old veteran police officer was in pursuit of a speeding automobile, when he heard a thunderous roar and saw a bluish-orange flame appear in the distance. His first thought was that a nearby dynamite shack had exploded, and he radioed headquarters of his plans to investigate. As he neared his destination, he saw an oval-shaped shiny object. He described it as the size of an automobile with no windows and no entrance of any kind. He said there was a red drawing on the side of the object and that he observed two beings clad in white overalls walking around the craft. According to his report, the beings were small, like children. As he radioed his office that he planned to take a closer look, one of the beings saw him and they climbed into the craft. Before he could approach the scene, he heard an engine roar to life and the craft lifted and flew away.

Shortly thereafter, several police officers and investigators showed up at the site. Deep landing marks were found and photographed. Footprints were found, as well as bent and burned brush around the landing spot.

Lonnie Zamora was a trained police office, and like Zamora, the police officers in this chapter were trained to observe and report objectively.

Ira

Ira was a police officer I worked with on a gang intervention program. He was in his mid-forties, the single father of two teenage sons, who was known and respected by the other officers for his "coolness" in time of crisis. I met Ira for lunch to discuss a campaign I had learned about called "Stop the Violence." During our conversation, he mentioned that he had an interesting experience the previous weekend.

"I was in the Gulf War," he explained. "I have been around all kinds of planes in the military. But never have I seen anything like the aircraft I saw on the road last weekend. I'm not an engineer or a pilot, but I believe it broke all records in term of speed, and the maneuverability was unbelievable. It could turn on a dime, slow down, and then accelerate to an unimaginable speed within a second."

"Were you alone when you saw it?" I asked.

"My boys, Jacob and Wilson, were with me. We were coming home from a basketball game."

"How close were you to the object?" I asked.

"At one point, it came across the road in front of us and just hovered over the road. I slowed and was getting ready to turn the pickup around and head in the opposite direction, when it zoomed across the road, banked against a hill, and lifted upward at such a speed that any plane would have stalled. It was just unbelievable."

"Did you see anyone else on the highway?" I asked.

"There were no other cars."

"After such a sighting, what do you think about those people who say that UFOs are weather balloons or atmospheric changes?" I asked.

"I think they need glasses," he laughed. "But the truth is, I feel a little angry. The government needs to quit lying to the people. We need to be told the truth. What I saw was no plane. It was not a weather balloon, and it was not some atmospheric inversion. It

was a spacecraft. If we aren't friends with those guys, we need to be."

"Are you saying we should be friends with the space travelers?" I asked.

"Absolutely."

"Have you told anyone else about this encounter?" I asked.

Ira nodded. "I have two close buddies, Tony Loneman and Jake Sparrow, on the force. We confide in each other. We are all single dads. I'm raising my two boys, Tony has three boys and Jake has a daughter. Both have had encounters. When they reported the events, the other officers began teasing them unmercifully. They called them the "little green men patrol," and every morning they are asked about UFOs and little green men." He paused for a moment. "I can't guarantee anything, but I could ask them if they would be willing to tell their stories. They're pretty gun-shy with all the teasing."

The next day, I stopped at the police station to see Ira, and he told me that Tony and Jake had agreed to talk to me about their experience. We walked out to Ira's car, and he called them. They agreed to meet me in the Super 8 lobby after their shift at 5 p.m.

Tony and Jake

When they walked in at precisely the designated time, they introduced themselves to me. Tony suggested that we drive to the Dairy Queen and get something to drink. "We can sit at one of the outside tables. That way it will be private."

"We don't feel comfortable talking where someone can hear," Jake explained. "When it happened, we told some of the other officers, and they're still teasing us about seeing little green men."

"It's a reputation we will take to our graves," Tony interjected. "Probably our kids will be described as the son or daughter of one of the little green men patrol cops. The teasing is unmerciful here.

It is a part of the culture, but a part I could do without."

We left the motel and in less than five minutes, Tony pulled the police cruiser next to my Subaru. Tony and I chose a picnic table while Jake ordered chocolate milkshakes to go around.

"It happened last fall," Tony said, handing me a chocolate shake. "We were hunting up on the east end. It was getting dark and we decided to head back to the pickup. Jake saw it first."

"I saw it come over the hill, stop, and then disappear behind the hill," Jake said. "I was sure that it landed. Tony didn't believe me at first. There was no sound. But then, he saw the glow from the lights and knew something was there. After a few minutes, we decided to go around the hill and take a look."

"It didn't take much time to find it," Tony said.

"Can you describe it?" I asked.

"It was circular," Tony said. "There were white lights at the bottom of the craft."

"There were red lights, too," Jake interjected.

"That's right. I saw four red lights."

"Was there any activity around the craft?" I asked.

"There were two figures. They dressed in dark clothes. They got out and walked around the craft," Jake said. "I don't know what they were doing. We had our rifles with us and talked about capturing them so we'd have proof of what we saw. Then we decided that it might bring the FBI onto the reservation in droves and that was the last thing we needed. So we just hid ourselves and watched."

"They weren't harming anyone or anything that I could see," Tony said. "They were just walking around and looking at the exterior of their craft. I didn't see any weapons. Sure, it would be nice to settle the issue of UFOs. I wouldn't mind being the person to do it either, but I told Jake, when the white man came to this country, some of them captured unsuspecting Indians and paraded

them around like they weren't humans."

"We didn't want to be like that," Jake said. "We're deer hunters not alien hunters."

"We're police officers, too," Tony said. "We went to a ceremony after that and talked to a medicine man. He told us the Star People had been visiting our people from the beginning of time, and they were peaceful and meant us no harm."

"He said it is the white man who doesn't believe in Star People," said Jake. "Indians have always known they visit Mother Earth."

"How long did you watch the craft?" I asked.

"Ten or fifteen minutes. It was after seven when we got back to the pickup."

"Were they still there when you left?"

"No. We stayed there and watched until they got back in the spacecraft and lifted off. Within a matter of seconds, they were gone."

"After they left," said Jake, "I realized how excited I was. I could hear my heart beating. That's when it sunk in what we had seen."

"One of our friends, another police officer, had a similar experience at Bitskin Buttes on the same day," Tony said. "That's over on the east side. We could ask him if he would talk to you."

"I'm not sure he will talk with you," Jake said. "We were sworn to secrecy. Brett knows what we've been through, and he doesn't want the other officers to know."

"He's not as tough as us," Tony said, smiling. "We got thick skin."

I studied him closely, but the look in his eyes betrayed him. Both Tony and Jake had been affected by their encounter, but more so from the humiliation of their fellow officers than from the aliens.

Brett

Later that evening I got a telephone call from Officer Brett Pine. He agreed to meet with me to discuss his experience as long as his identity was kept secret. We decided to meet at 5 p.m. the next day when he got off duty.

When Brett showed up at the appointed place, he got out and introduced himself, and invited me to join him in his pickup. "I thought you might like to take a ride out to Bitskin Buttes," he said. "A pickup is better on these gravel roads than a Subaru."

"Was this your first encounter with a spacecraft?" I asked, as we drove east.

"When I was a boy, my Dad used to take me hunting down along the river. That's where the star people used to leave messages for the elders. I don't know why they stopped coming. I don't even know why I remembered that. It was a long time ago when he told me that story."

"Is your father still alive?" I asked.

"Yes. He lives with me now. He fought like hell to stay independent. He is 95 now. But sometimes you have to accept your fate and make the best out of life. I think that is what he has done."

"Can you tell me about your encounter?" I asked.

"I remember the date—it was April 13, 2004. It was my birthday, and my Auntie May was giving me a birthday dinner. I had driven out here to investigate some complaints by ranchers that something was spooking their cattle and horses. It was in the late evening when I was returning back to base when I saw this craft fly over the highway in front of me and go behind the buttes and disappear. I slowed, waiting for it to come into view again, but it didn't."

"How big was the craft?" I asked.

"It towered over me. I would say the craft was at least 60 feet

in diameter and maybe 40 or 50 feet high. There were pulsing red lights coming from the bottom, and when it crossed over the road everything turned a reddish color—the highway, the rocks, and the trees. There was no noise, but when it crossed my path the lights on my cruiser dimmed and for a moment I thought they would go out, but then they brightened even brighter than before."

"What did you do when the craft disappeared?" I asked.

"I stopped the cruiser along the side of the road and got out. I listened for sounds. I watched the night sky. I looked toward the horizon searching for any sign of what I had seen. There was nothing, so I decided to hike over to the butte and see if there was anything there." Brett slowed the pickup and pulled to the side of the road.

"I parked about here," he said, as he parked parallel to Bitskin Buttes. "Would you like to take a walk?"

I climbed out of the pickup and followed him. About 15 minutes later we reached the butte. "I walked around this side," he said, as he guided me to the far side of the butte. "It was about here that I saw the lights, and I cautiously continued until I had a full view of the craft. There were four small man-like creatures walking underneath the craft. It was like they were doing some kind of a spot check to make sure the craft was okay. It was an amazing sight. I stood there for a few moments and observed the scene in front of me. Then I decided to walk out into full view and call to them. When I did that, they immediately climbed into their craft and sped away into the night. I have played that scene over a thousand times in my mind. I wonder if I should have just stayed quiet. Maybe I would have learned something. Or I could have simply walked up to them without calling to them. Maybe they would not have been so frightened. Anyway, that's my story. It happened exactly like that. On my way home I struggled with whether or not I should report the episode. Eventually, I decided to

keep my mouth shut. I have to take care of my dad and my four girls. I don't want someone to think I'm under too much stress from family and furlough me. I can't afford it."

"Do you think the Bureau of Indian Affairs would do that?" I asked.

"Definitely. Worst yet, since I'm a veteran of Iraq, I didn't want anyone to think I had PTSD. I could lose my job for good. I've heard of it happening to other guys in my outfit. No. When it comes to these things, it's better to keep your mouth shut."

"If you can think back to the night of the event, did you get a closer look at the craft when you came upon it at the landing site?" I asked.

"It towered over me. It was big. It never set down on the ground; it just hovered there, maybe three or four feet off the ground. The lights lit the ground like it was daylight. I saw no markings. We put flags on everything. I looked for a flag. There were no windows. I think it was dark gray, but again, I am looking at it in the light being generated by the craft and it was night."

"Was there a doorway?" I asked.

"There was a hatch or something underneath the craft. The creatures climbed up inside and were gone when they saw me."

"Can you describe the creatures or beings that you saw?"

"Not very well. They were maybe four feet tall. I say that because they could walk underneath the craft with ease. That would have been impossible for me and I am five feet 10 inches tall. Their outfit defined their bodies. It was humanoid. It was light colored, maybe white or light gray. Their heads seemed large for their bodies and their arms were long for their size. I remember that."

"Can you think of anything else?" I asked.

"I remember that I did not feel afraid of them. I was excited to see the craft. I knew that they were not of this earth and I knew I

was witnessing something that confirmed what my father had told me about visitors from space."

"Did you return to this site after the event?" I asked.

"The very next day. I drove out here, parked the cruiser, and walked out to the site. There was no evidence that they had been here. I walked the entire area looking for signs. There was nothing."

I talked with Brett several times after our initial meeting. His father still tells stories about the Star People, and Brett tells me that whether on duty or not, he always keeps an eye on the night sky.

Chapter 27
An Alien Hitchhiker

There are a number of stories that circulate among UFOlogists about hitchhikers' encounters with UFOs. One of the more famous is known as the Exeter Encounter, which occurred in 1965 when a young hitchhiker had a close encounter with a UFO. After failing to get help from a nearby farmhouse, he was picked up by an elderly couple who took him to the police station. Together with two highly credible, police officers, he returned to the site and witnessed the event again.

This chapter tells a story of a driver who picked up a hitchhiker, who then took him on the ride of his life.

Dakota

I met Dakota one late afternoon at the Holiday Inn in Chinle, Arizona. He approached me as I entered the hotel and asked if he could talk with me. He explained that he had had an encounter and wanted to talk with someone about it. We found a secluded table in the almost-empty restaurant and ordered ice tea.

"Are you from around here?" I asked, as we ordered iced tea.

"Actually, I'm from South Dakota," he replied. "I got a degree in Computer Science and established my own business providing on-site assistance to tribal governments who were setting up computer systems. I was lucky. I got my degree just as the tribes starting coming into the technological age. I was the only Indian company offering such a service, so it has been a good business. I started out as the only consultant, but now I have 10 employees

who travel the reservation-circuit assisting tribes."

"So do you come to the Southwest often?"

"Every month," he replied. He paused as the waitress set the ice teas before us. When she was out of hearing range, he continued. "It happened on the road between Window Rock and Chinle. It was about midnight. It was half raining, half snowing. I was taking it easy because that road is dark at night and oncoming traffic sometimes blinds you as it comes up over some of the little hills. I saw this figure along the side of the road and I stopped. You know how it is, if you see another Indian walking along the side of the road, you stop and pick him up. You figure if you're on the reservation, it's a brother. And you always help out one of your own. "

"I understand. I've done the same thing," I replied.

"At the time, I didn't know he was an alien," he said.

"Did you say you picked up an alien?" I asked.

"Yes. That's what I think he was, but I thought he was an Indian when I picked him up."

"But now you believe he was an alien?"

"I not only believe it, I know it."

"When did you realize he was an alien?" I asked.

"When he got into the car, I noticed he was not dressed like an Indian. Indians around here wear jeans, denim jackets, and either a t-shirt or shirt. It was a cold night. It was snowing between Window Rock and Chinle, and he wasn't wearing a jacket. He was wearing something like coveralls, but it was a strange material. It seemed to glow in the lights of the dashboard. When I asked him where he was headed, he pointed ahead without saying a word."

"Didn't you think that was strange?"

"I'm not a Navajo and their culture is a different. It is more closed than my culture and yours. I thought since he didn't know me, he just didn't want to talk."

“At what point did you think he was an alien?” I asked.

“If you have ever traveled the road between Window Rock and Chinle, you know the road has a number of small hills. It was dark and raining with a mixture of snow. On one stretch of the road, I came up over a hill and was blinded by what I thought was an oncoming semi-truck. But suddenly, my car stalled. The light up ahead became stationary. I decided there must be an accident up ahead, but for the time being, I was concerned about my dead automobile. I was sitting the middle of the road. It was snowing outside. I worried that someone would come up behind me and be blinded by the light and rear-end me. As I tried to restart my car, my passenger got out of the car and walked into the light. He returned momentarily with a companion and they opened the car and told me to go with them.”

“How did you feel about that?”

“At first, I thought it was a joke. But then, I felt like I had no choice; not only that, I felt like I had no will. ”

“What about the car?” I asked.

“They said it would be all right.”

“Did they speak to you?”

“I’m not sure. I just knew it would be all right.”

“Where did they take you?” I asked.

“They took me on board a spacecraft.”

“Can you describe the beings?”

“When I realized I was on board a spacecraft, I was excited. I heard about people being taken aboard a spacecraft, but I never expected it to happen to me. I wanted to ask all kinds of questions but I was placed in a room with other Indians, Navajo, I think. They just left me there and no one was talking. I tried to talk to the guys next to me but they just ignored me. I was the only one not in some kind of a trance-like condition.”

“Can you describe your abductors?” I asked again.

“They were about as tall as me, but much slimmer. They wore a type of jumpsuit with a silver triangle on the chest. They looked like humans.”

“Did they look like Indians?”

“No. They were fairer. I remember seeing their hand against my skin. Their fingers were so long and white.”

“Do you remember what happened to you while you were on board the craft?” I asked.

“I don’t know. I was taken from the room where I was with a group of men to another room where I was alone. It was at that point that I began to worry about my safety. I tried to run away, but they stopped me without touching me.”

“What do you mean, without touching you?”

“I’m not sure. One moment I am running down a corridor, and the next I am frozen to the spot. I can’t move. I don’t know what caused it, but I was frightened. I think it was at that moment that I realized they were in control and there was no need to resist. Before, I remembered thinking I am stronger than these guys, because they were so slight of build. But I was wrong. They rendered me helpless. After that, I don’t know what happened. I remember lights, very bright lights.”

“Did you have any injuries?”

“None. The next thing I remember is being back in my car. I turned the key in the ignition and it started up immediately. I drove to Chinle and checked into the hotel here. The next morning, I noticed that my neck was stiff and my left arm was sore, but I credited that to my struggling or sleeping the wrong way.”

“So now that you have had time to think about it, what do you believe happened to you?” I asked.

“I believe I picked up an alien along the side of the road, thinking I was picking up a Navajo. I think that once we got back to his spaceship, they took me on board, probably to convince me

that nothing happened, maybe to wipe out my memory, but it didn't work. I remember the key events. But it taught me one thing. I am more careful about picking up strangers." He laughed.

"Anything else?" I asked.

"I have always wondered about space and if there was life out there. Now I know that aliens exist. When I hear about UFOs I won't be so critical of those who come forward. I would probably lose my contracts if I said anything. Do you think I'm crazy when I tell you this story?"

"No, I don't think you are crazy."

I have seen Dakota several times since that interview in Chinle. He has had two other encounters. Each time they take him aboard a spacecraft, he loses up to four hours of time. He has never been able to resist them. Lately, he has taken to traveling only during the day. He says he does not want to come upon space travelers in the middle of the night.

Chapter 28
American Indians and the Cosmic Connection

The 1970s witnessed an era in which American Indians were linked with extraterrestrials. These views altered attitudes about sacred sites and gained popularity through various disciplines. Almost overnight, indigenous holy places were centers of mysterious spiritual forces connected to alien ancestors, and American Indian spirituality became rooted in the science of superior ancient civilizations founded by star travelers.

Interests in ancient knowledge originated with the study of European sites like Stonehenge, where scholars noted the arrangements of the stones followed astronomical alignments with the rising and setting of the sun and celebration of the solstice. American archaeologists reported similar alignments in Central and South American as well as the United States. Sites such as the Big Horn Medicine Wheel in Wyoming, Cahokia in Illinois, and Chaco Canyon in New Mexico recorded sophisticated astronomical knowledge. Emerging archeoastronomy coincided with UFO research popularized during the 1960s and 1970s. It was at this time that star visitors were associated with ancient archeological ruins. Through the work of Erich von Däniken, who proposed that evidence of UFOs existed in the cultures of the Mayas and Incas, an interest in ancient aliens and star people surfaced. Vine Deloria, Jr., a Lakota scholar, further popularized this notion by suggesting that traditional American Indian stories were perhaps not just

creation stories but collective memories through which the Native people understood the universe.

American Indians and the Star People

Many indigenous people throughout the world have safeguarded customs and ceremonies incorporating the Star People. Most, like many American Indian tribal groups, hold those traditions as part of their religion or, at the least, as part of their ancient history. Other tribes believe their creation is tied to ancestors from the stars and report regular communication and collaboration with the Star People. With the new interpretations of the ancient sites throughout the world, as well as in America, indigenous connections with the stars surfaced among several tribes. Among the most well known is the Hopi emergence myth, which details destruction of three earlier worlds when wars were fought with "flying shields" propelled by some unidentified power. It was not until 1955 that apocalyptic themes proliferated among the Hopi. Prime movers in these prophetic proclamations were a group of traditionalists who became famous not only in the Hopi world, but in the wider world as well.

In 1969 when Eagle landed on the moon, a Hopi told Robert Clemmer, a well-known researcher who has studied the Hopi prophecy, that "Hopis have been there before. If they look around up there, they will find our rock writings." Jose Lucero, a Tewa elder from the Santa Clara Pueblo, told author Nancy Red Star, "They say they get abducted. We get visited." Moreover, in 1970 Chief Dan Katchongva, a Hopi elder, announced a UFO connection to Hopi religion. The elder Hopi told of a future when space travelers from other planets would lift the tribe's faithful on the Day of Purification and take them to safer worlds in the universe. According to Katchongva, an ancient rock carving near Mishongnovi, Arizona, depicting a dome-shaped saucer object and

a Hopi female, was the core of their religious beliefs.

Many of the ancient and original stories of other tribal groups that have maintained their fidelity through the generations, without contemporary interpretations, have been ignored. Perhaps, herein, lies the real connection with Star People, UFOs, and American Indians.

Despite the lack of familiarity with traditional myths and legends, stories of tribal relationships with Star People surfaced in the 80s and early 90s. While these stories lack the contemporary interpretation found in the Hopi myths, they stand as an example of an ancient knowledge and involvement with Star People. For example, Cherokee stories told of the Star People who created Elohi (Earth) for the Cherokee people. The Iroquois and Cherokee believed in the supernatural powers of the "Thunderers." They told the story of a young man who had been thrown into a ravine and deserted by his friends after he broke his leg. He awoke to find four men dressed in cloudlike robes. When he asked them who they were, they said they were the "Thunderers" and were there to protect him. Other tribes had similar stories. The Algonquin story of a great willow basket that descended from the sky with 12 beautiful women has been equated to a modern-day UFO. The Blackfeet Indians told how a young woman fell in love with the Morning Sun, who took her to live in the sky. The Skidi band of Pawnee designed their lodges and villages in alignment with the stars and planets. Part of their creation story reported that Mars, the red morning star warrior, married Venus, the female evening star, to produce the first humans. The Cree claimed they came from the stars in spirit form and then became flesh and blood. The Seminole told of traveling upward to the sky to visit the Great Spirit. The Snoqualmie people told a story of two sisters who wished that two stars in the night sky would become their husbands, and when they woke, they were in the sky world and

the stars were men. The older sister had an infant called Star Child, and when she took him home to the Earth, they called him the Transformer. On Earth, Star Child used his heavenly powers to transform or change the world.

The Tula Indians of Tanico were the "Keepers of Manataka," a spiritual mountain located in Arkansas and regarded as the place where the Star People visited. This mountain was a sacred site for the Caddo, Quapaw, Osage, Tunica and Pawnee. The Tula told that inside the Manataka Mountain were seven crystal caves. The center cave featured a magnificent shining crystal encoded with messages from the Star People. Blanca Massif, situated in the San Luis Valley and regarded as "the sacred mountain of the east" by most Southwestern tribes, is an area where Navajos say Star People arrive in flying seedpods. The Pawnee tell a story about a person called Pahokatawa who came to Earth as a meteor. When killed by an enemy, the gods came from the sky and brought him back to life. Pahokatawa taught the Pawnee that when meteors fell in great numbers, it was not a sign the world would end.

Star People and Little People

Many tribes have stories of races of small people who lived on the land or who came from the stars and abducted women and children. The Cherokees, who moved to the Southeastern part of the of what is now the United States, found their new homeland occupied by a race of small people who lived below ground and were quite civilized. Reportedly, however, they had very large eyes that were extremely sensitive to light. Some stories say that they had blue skin, and the Cherokees called them the Moon People. The small blue people the Cherokee people met are not to be confused with the Yunwi Tsunsdi, the little people who live in the forest and are a central part of traditional Cherokee stories. UFO

researcher Jacques Vallee describes how the little people abducted pregnant women and young mothers. He also told of how the little people seized young children sometimes leaving in the kidnapped child's place one of their own children. The tribal people called these children "Changelings." Other tribes tell stories of how the gods descended from the heavens and impregnated women in remote villages, allowing the women to raise the star children until the age of six when the gods returned and claimed their children. Many tribes told how these little people had a fondness for abducting women and children.

As I traveled throughout the United States interviewing American Indians who had personal encounters with UFOs and star beings, I learned of secrets that had been kept and passed along among family members. There were other secrets, too, secrets that every Indian knows but keeps private. Rigoberta Menchu knew these secrets when she wrote, "I'm still keeping my Indian identity a secret. I'm still keeping what I think no one should know. Not even anthropologists or intellectuals…can find out all our secrets." In this book, many secrets are told of encounters with Star People that have remained unspoken until now.

About the Storytellers

As I wrote the stories of the individuals I met over the years, I told the stories as they were told to me. The stories do not represent the complete content of the interviews, but selective conversations were chosen for purposes of brevity. Results of the research show that these individuals were not more "spiritual" than any ordinary person, although many held positions of respected elders within their tribes. There were indications that many of the people were open to these experiences because of the legends or stories about the Star People and this may have made them more

receptive to visitations. Some of the individuals spoke to me with a reluctance brought on by fear of reprimands from family or tribal members, while pointing out that they wanted to share their story in the event it would bring some understanding to individuals who did not understand the purpose of the Star People visitations.

In telling their stories, I was bound to the promise of confidentiality since none of the individuals who spoke to me wanted publicity or fame. Often, these individuals searched me out because they heard of my interest in UFOs and star beings. In other cases, they were referred to me by a relative or a friend who were acquaintances of mine. In no case, and there were several, have I included any story where I felt the identity of the individual might be compromised. All were American Indian, and I personally conducted each of the interviews. Seventy-five percent of the interviewees lived on reservations in 15 states. None of the individuals I met had characteristics consistent with the psychological or personality disorders or distinguishing behavioral traits described by early researchers who rejected the notion that alien abductions were real. My research showed the individuals were not only responsible, contributing members of their tribes, they were also honest individuals, not given to falsehoods or deceit. The majority had never shared their encounters outside their immediate families or close friends.

Approximately 30 percent were college educated and held professional jobs; they were teachers, law enforcement investigators or practitioners, as well as tribal administrators. Another 25 percent were respected elders. The remaining were individuals of varying educational levels from high school dropouts to those who had attended “some college classes.” Of the group, 78 percent were employed.

Some of the stories were told with humor. One witness, who said he was a victim of repeated abductions beginning in early

childhood, confided, “When you laugh about something, you’re not crying. I’m an abductee, but I’m other things, too. I’m a son, an uncle, a big brother, a juvenile correction officer, a friend, and an all-around good guy on my bad days.” He laughed and then looked at me and said, “You probably wouldn’t want to see me on my good days. I’m totally irresistible.” Growing up Indian allowed me to understand his humor, whereas someone outside the culture might have totally misunderstood his comment.

All of the witnesses presented articulate, believable stories about their encounters. All possessed a strong sense of self and professed strong religious convictions, whether they were practicing Christians or active in American Indian religious practices and ceremonies. The majority were practicing Catholics who also participated in Indian ceremonies. All recalled their experiences without the aid of hypnotism. Only one individual had a history of alcohol abuse. None of the others were alcoholics or drug users, nor were they in a recovery program for addictions. The majority of them feared teasing by other tribal members should their identity and stories ever reach the mainstream press. More importantly, the interviewees were concerned about the unwanted attention their experiences might bring to their reservations.

One hundred percent of the interviewees agreed that I could use their stories in future research and writings as long as they remained anonymous. In return, I agreed that should I ever write a book about American Indians and the Star People, I would donate 10 percent of any earnings to college scholarships for American Indian students. A scholarship fund has already been set up at Montana State University for that purpose.